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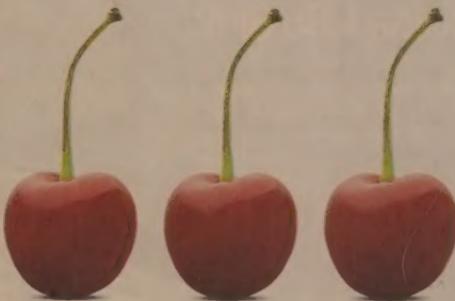
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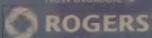
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NEWS • COPENHAGEN • BY MARLISS WEBER | 101 words

Something's Rotten In The State Of Denmark

LOCAL GREEN LEADERS SEE RED AS CANADA DRAGS ITS FEET ON THE WAY TO THE UNITED NATIONS COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

If you happen to mention the word "Copenhagen" within earshot of Edmonton-Strathcona MP Linda Duncan, you're bound to get a strong response.

"Pathetic," she says of the federal government's stance on climate change leading up to next week's UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. "Reprehensible. Embarrassing. What more can I say?"

A fierce critic of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's apparent lack of commitment to the green movement and his government's lack of action in time for Copenhagen, Duncan minces no words in expressing her frustration. "I'm sick and tired of the excuses," she says. "First it was that [Harper] was waiting for Obama, because we needed to harmonize. Then it was that he was waiting for China. Then it was that he's waiting for all 190 countries to sign on. We need to stop waiting, and start leading, because that Mr. Harper clearly doesn't get."

And that the Americans, under Obama, are now leading the environmental charge makes the Canadian position that much harder to stomach, says Duncan. "Obama is pouring billions into the renewable sector, and despite promises in the budget, our government hasn't even put a cent to it. Everything our government is doing is at complete odds with the direction the Americans are heading, and frankly, every other nation in the world."

Next week's Copenhagen Conference is an opportunity for all of those nations to come together to discuss our joint interest, namely putting some key commitments on paper to "greenify" our planet. "It's about time," says Duncan. "Copenhagen is the deadline we need to commit to some real changes in how we manage our resources. And the fact that we, as Canadians, are coming to the table basically empty-handed is a crying shame."

A particular frustration for Duncan lies with the fact that on the federal level, neither the Progressive Conservatives nor the Liberals are willing to take any strong measures to combat climate change.

mate change, which leads to our poor showing at international conferences like Copenhagen. "Remarkably, the Liberals actually voted for a climate change accountability act before the last election," Duncan says. But the bill died when Harper called the early election last fall. Duncan says she expected support from both the Liberals and the Bloc when the bill was tabled in the spring, but no such support was to be found. "We were hoping to have something substantial to take to Copenhagen," she says.

"But the Liberals have decided to delay that bill so that it won't even be looked at until after Copenhagen. They're all in cahoots with Harper."

This sentiment is echoed by Saya Das, local strategist and author

of *Green Oil: Clean Energy for the 21st Century?* "The Canadian position on climate change is truly appalling," says Das, pointing the finger directly at Harper and his big business, oil-and-gas connections. "You have only to look at where the prime minister comes from," he says. "He's a Calgary guy, he's a Reform-Alliance guy, even though he calls himself a Progressive Conservative."

According to Das, Harper is lacking motivation for a green revolution based on his politics and is out of step with the direction much of the rest of the world is heading. "He's still playing by the Bush-Cheney rulebook. It's only reluctantly aligning himself with the current American position, and he's not acknowledging that they are as far ahead on this issue as they are."

Not that it's a competition, exactly. But Das feels strongly that it's up to Canadians – and Albertans in particular – to be owners, stewards, of our resources. And to communicate to our leaders that we want to see a change in how our resources are managed and controlled. "It's time for Albertans to step up to the plate and to act like the owners of the resources that we are," he says. "Do landowners protest how their tenants use their property? No. Owners demand their tenants follow their rules and guidelines. We shouldn't have to beg our leaders to follow the green agenda. We should simply educate them that it is what we want, as owners of the land. It is what we demand."

So how should Albertans take this kind of strong stance? According to Das, it's about communicating clearly to our leaders that we want to see a change. "It's about gathering together," he says. "We can't blame the politicians for doing something we don't want them to do if we just quietly grumble and complain in our own kitchens. So we have to work together. We have to write letters to our MPs and MLAs. Go to town hall meetings. Speak passionately and be heard. That's the only way to push the green agenda."

Duncan would like us to take it one step further. "Yes, the grassroots movement is important," she says. "But I would like to see our minister of the environment and the prime minister actually step up to the plate and commit some real money to developing nations who are going to feel the brunt of the impacts of climate change. And to see them come to the table with some binding federal legislation."

Duncan is heading to the Copenhagen conference next week as part of a Canadian contingent that includes Stephen Harper and Environment Minister Jim Prentice. Several of the premiers are going as well, but not Alberta's Premier Ed Stelmach, who has been criticized for prioritizing the economy over the environment. But that argument is getting old, Duncan sniffs. "It's time for our governments to realize that the economy and the environment are not at odds," she says. "It's not about jobs versus the environment. It's about creating green jobs, green energy, and a sustainable economy. For us now, and for future generations."



Activist Central: A Pale Shadow Of The 1960s

LOCAL GREEN ACTIVISTS HAVE TROUBLE HIDING THEIR PESSIMISM IN THE LEAD-UP TO COPENHAGEN

The Activist

With 40 years of activism under his belt, Martin Tweedale is no stranger to civil disobedience when it comes to fighting for the environment.

Now a semi-retired philosophy professor at the University of Alberta, Tweedale developed a taste for activism in California in 1969. Civil disobedience was at its peak, and activists revelled in the notion that people marching in the streets could influence government policy — perhaps most notably in 1975 when then-president Richard Nixon pulled the U.S. out of Vietnam, responding in part to pressure from activists.

Tweedale, however, turned his attention to the environment and joined the Planning and Conservation League (PCL) — an organization devoted to the issues of air pollution and coastline preservation. "It was working [at PCL]," Tweedale says, "that I became aware of how deep these issues run, and how much we are our own worst enemies in this whole issue." Those sentiments still ring true today, and 40 years after

leaving California's activism scene, Tweedale finds himself on the frontlines once again — this time fighting for environmental justice on the Prairies.

The Fight

Recently, local activists like Tweedale have been facing a two-pronged attack from the federal and provincial governments on the issue of climate change. On the world stage, 65 global leaders will be meeting next week in Copenhagen for the UN Climate Change Conference, where they will begin negotiations on international climate change policy.

Unfortunately, Canadians have already been let down, says Lindsay Telfer, prairie director for the Sierra Club. Telfer helped organize a rally outside the Sutton Place Hotel on Nov. 13, when Environment Minister Jim Prentice swung through town for a speaking engagement. "The big thing that has become clear in the last couple of weeks," she says, "is that Canada really is being a clear roadblock to successful negotiations in Copenhagen.

"I think progress in Canada as a whole has been pretty sad," she continues, noting that U.S. President Barack Obama has committed

to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 17 per cent from 2005 levels by 2020, and that even China is coming to the table with a solid objective.

Ideally, Telfer would like to see Canada reduce emissions by 25-30 per cent from 1990 levels by 2020, and 80 per cent by 2050. But that's probably not going to happen, Telfer says, and she feels Prentice has missed the opportunity to become a real global leader on climate change.

The Protest

As for Tweedale, he didn't fare well on the federal front either, as he participated in a peaceful sit-in organized by Citizens for Climate Action on Nov. 25 inside the office of Labour Minister Rona Ambrose. The sit-in was the second in a series of rallies held in various politicians' offices, including that of Prentice and Finance Minister Jim Flaherty.

The group, which included Tweedale and his wife Maureen McGinley, converged on Ambrose's office to deliver a list of demands that included the creation of more green jobs, a more aggressive stance on climate change, and formal acknowledgement of the impact that climate change is having on people around the world.



Acting The Part | Martin Tweedale in his office at the University of Alberta. PHOTO BY MERV SMITH/LAWTON

Ambrose was in Ottawa at the time, but the protesters managed to get her on the phone before they were asked to leave at the end of office hours. Tweedale and his wife politely refused to give up their seat, and the police were called. "We were both willing to get arrested," Tweedale says, "and if necessary, we would have taken criminal charges, but fortunately they just gave us tickets."

The trespassing tickets were worth \$240 apiece, and Tweedale and McGinley say it's just one more disappointment in on the long list of letdowns by the Canadian government.

The Province

Unfortunately the provincial government hasn't been doing much better, as Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach announced last month that Alberta will be investing \$4.95 million in the Alberta Carbon Trunk Line — one of four carbon capture and storage projects currently in the works.

The 240-kilometre conduit will connect the Fort Saskatchewan region to oil developments near Red Deer, where it will carry 14 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually. Though it's being done in the name of the environment, activists aren't convinced that carbon capture and storage is the answer.

"It captures it and attempts to store it, and we keep our fingers crossed and hope it never leaks," Telfer says. "Essentially it's pushing the problem off to another generation."

Instead, Telfer and Tweedale say that the province should be investing in the creation of a long-term sustainable green economy. However, Jerry Bellikka, director of communications for Alberta Energy, says carbon capture is the best bet for the province, and that similar projects have been successful elsewhere, including a 10-year program in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. Bellikka also says emissions captured by the Trunk Line will benefit the economy

Using conventional means, developers are only able to access about 20 per cent of the oil sitting in reservoirs they tap. By pumping captured carbon into these wells, they will boost oil recovery, which will translate into more oil royalties for the province.

"That whole logic is absurd as a solution," scoffs Telfer, who feels that decisions like this are adding to a negative worldview of Canada. Former British International Development Secretary Clare Short, for instance, has several top scientists backing up her request that Canada be expelled from the Commonwealth due to our inaction on environmental issues.

For Tweedale and Telfer, it's these sentiments that make activism such an important endeavour. But Edmonton's current activism scene is a pale shadow of what it was in the 1960s when Tweedale got his start. "I think the public awareness of the importance of the issues is a lot less now than it was then," he says. Nowadays, he notes, an activist group is lucky if they can draw 50 people to an event. Telfer agrees that public participation in protests has been less than ideal, but adds that the Sierra Club's Green Economy in Alberta forum on Nov. 12 fared better than the Prentice protest, attracting about 100 people.

However, both agree that they need to keep their spirits high, and even with Prentice and Harper arriving in Copenhagen with no solid plan of action, they hold out the hope that some progress will be achieved simply as a result of them being there.

"Something that gets us past the stalemate we're at now would be excellent," says Tweedale, but he's not expecting any mammoth steps to be taken.

"We've got to realize that the age of fossil fuels is coming to an end, and get ourselves off of it, and the sooner we do it the better. If you keep delaying it, the transition is going to be all that much harder, until the transition just becomes catastrophe."

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frontlines

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

" THIS \$285 MILLION IS A ROCK SOLID INVESTMENT FOR ALBERTA.

— ENERGY MINISTER MEL KNIGHT ON THE SWAN HILLS SYN FUEL PROJECT TO CONVERT COAL TO GAS AND PETROCHEMICALS, AS QUOTED BY THE EDMONTON JOURNAL

SOME THEATRE, WITH A SIDE OF GRAVY?

Gravy. According to Webster's *Online Dictionary*, it's a "tasty sauce made from meat drippings."

It's also "money profit or benefit easily or illicitly gained." Or simply extra money or benefits you weren't expecting.

The theme of the 29th Edmonton International Fringe Festival, which will take place next August, "It's All Gravy." Last Monday's launch was 1950s-inspired, with *Mad Men*-inspired images of TV dinners and kitschy magazine ads.

But does the gravy theme perhaps send out some odd, if not outright bad, connotations to audiences and critics?

First, there's the gravy image itself. Do you really want to contemplate a viscous, brown, potentially lumpy, meat-smelling condiment when you're on the grounds of a theatre festival? The imagery isn't especially... well, savoury, if you'll pardon the pun. In association with a good show, the reference seems insulting. And a bad show... well, it calls to mind another viscous, brown substance.

Okay, maybe in that instance it's apropos.

And despite what you might think about your mother's gravy, it's bad for you. It's a sauce made from animal fat. So are they saying that Fringing is bad for you too? Is it nothing more than a guilty treat?

And if you'll indulge us in one more literal reference to gravy — it's the sauce we put on our meat, it's not the meat itself. Which implies there's nothing of substance to be found at our annual celebration of the theatre arts.

All of which begs the question — are Julian Mayne and the other Fringe staff members who came up with this monster closet Conferences? It's like they're asking for a bud-

get slashed.

And then there's that whole "easily or illicitly gained" connotation Webster's mentioned. Maybe this is in reference to the \$2 surcharge the Fringe places on all tickets bought through their computerized front-of-house system. Gone are the days of picking up a last-minute, all-proceeds-to-the-artist ticket. It really is all gravy for the Fringe, although this is perhaps a dangerous message to be putting into the minds of festivalgoers.

Gravy also implies the Fringe festival is rolling in dough. Yes, they did get that sweet \$400K mod from the government last April. But the Fringe, like every other arts organization in town, is still hungry for cash and government grants. A slogan like "It's All Gravy" sends the message that the arts organization doesn't need to work hard for its living, which again, opens itself up to the knife-wielding budgetary gods who are always looking for an excuse to trim the fat. (And without sat fat, what would they use to make the gravy?)

So okay. Perhaps the metaphor is a little rich. But the fact remains that arts organizations need public and private funding or they cease to exist. And that funding, particularly in a province like Alberta, with its priorities in the energy sector at the expense of most other areas, is hard to come by.

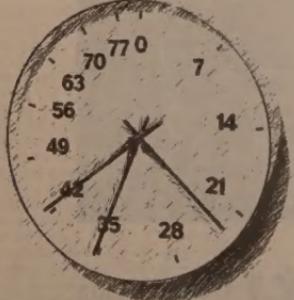
Yes, it's just a cute, catchy, kitschy title for an arts festival. But our arts organizers need to pay close attention to their PR in order to ensure that strong messages are sent in support of Alberta's arts scene instead of subversively (although unintentionally) against it.

So, who wants a little gravy with their theatre?

BY THE NUMBERS • HOW YOUNG ARE WE?

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SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA



NUNAVUT 24.2 YEARS
ALBERTA 35.6 YEARS
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR 42.9 YEARS



COMMENTARY • LEGISLATURE (16 words)

All In A Month's Work



OUTSIDE POLITICS: MAURICE TOUGAS
MAURICE LOOKS AT OUR HARDWORKING ALBERTA REPRESENTATIVES AND THEIR "STRENUOUS" FALL SESSION

The glorious Alberta Legislature, my tomb away from home for my three-and-a-half year sojourn into politics, sits quiet today. The ministers, the opposition, and the vast majority of Tory seat-moisteners have gone home, having completed an exhausting one-month fall session.

Yes, that's right. One month. The session began on Oct. 26 and ended on Nov. 26. And that month included a week off, leaving a total of just 20 sitting days. For comparison purposes, last year's fall session lasted from Oct. 14 to Dec. 3, with 41 sitting days. Apparently, Alberta is running so well, Ed Stelmach felt there was no reason to have an actual government session. Who says there's no

Alberta Advantage anymore?

For the past month, your correspondent has been dutifully reading Hansard, the official record of the proceedings of the legislature. Okay, maybe not exactly reading. Perhaps skimming is a better word. I defy anybody to actually read Hansard. But I did look at it over every day, mostly so I could keep you, my faithful reader(s), informed as to the events under the dome. Here is my report. It will be short, just like the session.

The session began with the Tories signaling that some things — like the lemming-like voting patterns of the government members — never change. Darshan Kang, an Alberta Liberal member from Calgary, proposed a motion that "the Legislative Assembly urges the government to require that all vehicles purchased through the executive vehicle allowance be low-emission vehicles."

Makes sense, right? Have the government set an example by buying low-emission vehicles. Who could vote against that?

Well, how about Edmonton Tory MLAs Doug Elsinki, Carl Benito, Thomas Lukaszuk, and Naren Bhardwaj? The backbench seat-warmer all dutifully voted with the

government against even the suggestion that the government purchase low-emission vehicles. That's just the kind of courageous, maverick thinking we want from our MLAs.

Edmonton's MLAs remained mostly mute throughout the session, although some weighed in with carefully prepared statements in support of Alberta Capital Bonds. Reading (sorry, skimming) Hansard reminded me vividly why I hated being in there. Everybody joined in on the fun with endless statements on these trivial bonds, a debate that stretched over two days. Not one word about this appeared in the media.

Once again, Edmonton Tory MLAs stepped up with the kind of hard-hitting questions that Glenn Beck might ask Sarah Palin. Edmonton-Calder's Doug "The Twitter Twit" Elsinki asked the Minister of Justice to "please explain how community programs are contributing to overall crime prevention and reduction in Alberta." Pshaw! It takes guts to ask a question like that. Absolutely no pride whatsoever, but lots of guts. Edmonton-Ellerslie's Naren Bhardwaj asked a minister, "What is being done in your ministry to help

TOUGAS cont'd on p. 11

think Ahead

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HIDDEN HINA FISH GRIKOWSKY

FISH GRIKOWSKY BREAKS UP WITH HIS PC, BUT WILL HIS NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH MAC BE A PERFECT MATCH?

Well, it's over I just can't take this relationship anymore. There's just no use prolonging the abuse, right? Especially when I've already wasted so much time. Worst of all, I hate the way this thing is making me behave. The constant swearing, the endless revenge fantasies. No more. It has to end. Ctrl-alt-del.

See, I'm in the process of dumping Microsoft. In fact, if I had my way, I would saw Microsoft's fucking head off. Oh, but here we go again. Breathe in. Breathe out. Talk it through. Yeah, try to be an adult about this.

Let's go back. Before some of you people were even walking, I was proudly computer-bilingual. I've run both kinds of machine since. Willing and eager to cruise around on an Intel 386 DOS PC, I even programmed, not by excruciating note, the entirety of Talking Heads' "Heaven" in 1986. Back then, computers were strange frontiers, where your system booted up to a cursor prompt, and that was it! Ah, the good ol' days.

Of course, Apple Computers felt downright angelic when they bounced into the room as the first "user-friendlies." They were cute and coy and talked to you conversation-

ally and, holy shit, all the games! I bring up the early days because, after a decade of watching Microsoft turn our "magic thinking boxes" into dumpsters that nervously, incessantly remind us how unsafe we are using them, I want to remind you that new operating systems once arrived to make things better, not just cash.

Vista debacle made it impossible not to get cynical. Microsoft releases the terrible, expensive, creaking operating system into the universe in an attempt to smell like the rising competition. A total in itself to anyone who liked the way XP rode, by the way. After Vista is declared a total failure, Microsoft then releases another expensive operating system in record time, declaring themselves heroes. It's basically like I ransacked your living room last year and then went on about how I'm not doing it this year... but charged

Perfect. And no, I don't want to send an error report.

I know. Mac vs. PC is a classic cat vs. dogs debate. And for the record, I truly hate the smug Cult of Mac full of feels wearing M&F fleeces while reading the *Edmonton Journal* to get instructions on where restaurants they should eat at. With operating systems named after large cats, Macs strictly enforce exactly where to put things and how to do things, which is tough to stomach it's like having an extra man.

But relatively speaking, Microsoft isn't even human. More like eczema, maybe. How many thousands of stupid hourglasses? "Send error report" messages? "Program is not responding" balloons lagging around and video playback, pointlessly lost Word files ugly as start-up and system themes, firewalls that clog up everything, and yet still let viruses

NEW OPERATING SYSTEMS ONCE ARRIVED TO MAKE THINGS BETTER, NOT JUST CASH.

you for the pleasure of my company on both occasions.

Then came a test. I put the iBook and the Vista machine side by side and switched them on. My goal was to see how fast to get a search result, starting cold. Unfortunately, on the first try, the slick little PC had mandatory updates. So, seriously, 12 minutes. That was unfair, so I ran it again, and found my Garfield images on Google in just under four minutes, a normal chug. The iBook? Thirty-five seconds. With, again, no constant monologue about security. Even while writing this, my XP machine just started "doing something" and I couldn't type for two minutes.

in? Widen your scope a little and look at the recent CNET survey that polled Microsoft: Xbox 360 owners, who reported back a 60 per cent failure rate. With the red ring of death, mine died this year too. No problems with the PS3 yet. Or PS2. Or, for that matter, with two NDSes, four GameBoys, a TurboGrafx, an NES, a ColecoVision, two Intellivisions and an Atari 2600. All of them still run. Except my fucking Xbox.

Why should the largest computer company make things that actually work? What kind of crazy business idea is that? Anyway, I'm out. Goodbye, Microsoft. Now on to some real problems.

TOUGAS (cont'd from p. 9)

the homeless who have a mental illness?" Powerful, powerful stuff.

Another afternoon was taken up with an "emergency debate" on the swine flu screw-up. The end result was, as always, a lot of blather signifying nothing.

Electricity was a charged issue (I am so sorry about that one) during the session. West Edmonton MLAs David Xiao and Raj Sherman were flooded with e-mails and letters about burying the Heartland transmission power lines instead of putting them above ground. Both dutifully presented the concerns of their constituents to the legislature, and both artfully sidestepped actually expressing an opinion that might anger their government.

Sherman came the closest by asking the energy minister if he would "support" the burying of power lines, but neither actually said whether

they believe in burying the lines or not. I suspect they'll have to wait until Stelmach tells them what their opinion is going to be.

The bulk of the session was made up of debate over Bill 50, which will give the Tories almost Polibutro-style control over building power lines in the province. But as is always the case in Alberta, "debate" means opposition members talking for hours to themselves.

Aside from the government's bungling of the H1N1 vaccine, which dominated Question Period to the point of tedium, the questions and answers were pretty tame, at least on paper. The Liberals did find two interesting monetary nuggets, however. Edmonton Riverview's Kevin Taft revealed that Alberta Health paid \$135,000 to a numbered company that was half-owned by Health Minister Ron Lieper's campaign

manager. And Edmonton Gold Bar's Hugh MacDonald revealed that the government paid the \$59,000 tuition fee to an elite private school for its representative in Washington, and \$109,000 for an apartment in Beijing.

Didn't hear about those? Perhaps it's because the snoozing legislature press gallery didn't bother to report either. Stelmach's supposedly contemptuous reference to Brian Mason as a bus driver (which he was) was deemed newsworthy, but not \$100,000 spent on an apartment in China.

And now, the legislature sits empty. It won't spring into action again until February, if the government feels like having a winter session. Considering how desultory this past session was, maybe they should just stop the whole session. That would certainly serve their purposes.

NEWS BRIEF

MEMORIAL: TOM OLENKU CITY MOURNS LABOUR LEADER

A number of Edmonton city councillors, MLAs, and MP Linda Duncan joined members of the union movement to mark the sudden passing of Tom Olenku, president of the Edmonton & District Labour Council. A celebration of Olenku's life drew a crowd of about 400 to NorQuest College this past Saturday.

NorQuest president Dr. Wayne Shillington recalled working with Olenku as members of the United Way Cabinet and on the Vibrant Communities Edmonton Initiative. "The projects he was part of and the lives he influenced as a result of that work across the country leaves a legacy that we live well," said Shillington.

Olenku was secretary-treasurer of the EDLC for 14 years before being elected President in October 2003. Prior to that, he

held various positions with the Edmonton branch of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. Olenku sat on the Executive Council of the Alberta Federation of Labour, and was a member of the Campaign Cabinet for the United Way Alberta Capital Region, the Leadership Council of Vibrant Communities Edmonton, and the Governance Committee of the Edmonton Community Foundation.

Councillor Dave Thiele recalled that it was Olenku's vision and tenacity in large part that led to the implementation of the Labour Promenade in downtown Edmonton, across from City Hall. The last stage of Churchill Square now sees union flags flying overhead and a plaque, "The Hands That Built the City" which honours the contributions of workers and unions to our city's history.

Olenku, 59, was found deceased at home Saturday morning. The cause of death has yet to be determined. —Mimi Williams

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Would You Like Tzatziki With That?

THERE'S MORE TO FAST FOOD THAN SUPERSIZE COMBOS AND LATE NIGHT DRIVE-THROUGHS. ARE YOU LOVIN' IT?

Seems like the closer we get to the end of the year, the more we pick up speed, to the point where it's hard to conceive of how we're going to finish all the business of 2009 in time for 2010 to start on the right foot.

One of the major obstacles to progress is having to eat – as often as three times a day – in addition to all the other pressures and demands being made on our time. Shortcuts are inevitable.

Since hastily-grabbed meals on the fly have been the rule rather than the exception this past week or so, I thought I'd share some fleeting thoughts on two fleeting meals I have enjoyed in brief, easy-to-digest paragraphs that will enable readers to get it over with quickly and get on with more pressing business.

After a two-week detox that saw my perennial co-diner and me forego our favourite convenient consumables – meat, wheat, dairy, caffeine, alcohol, sugar – we took our fast with one of our favourite degenerate foodstuffs: the doner.

Usually we'd resort to Marco's Famous for a meat-stuffed pita with all the fixin's, but positive buzz about Prime Time Donair and Kebab (6572-288 Ave., 780-759-0202) in the heart of Mill Woods piqued my co-diner's interest. It came highly endorsed by several people of Middle Eastern extraction, so she picked up a couple of samples on her way home from work one day.

At some level, most donairs are pretty similar, derived as they are from identical bulbs of processed, papery beef. The difference, then, lies in the choice of sauces and the assortment of veggies rolled up with the rinds of meat.

Not only did Prime Time's donair chops lay on a hefty portion of beef, but they also ornamented it with the expected lettuce, tomatoes, and onions; then upped the ante with pickles, banana peppers, bell peppers, and onions.

Since we were taking out, they provided not one, not two, but three varieties of sauce on the side: yogurt tzatziki, potent garlic sauce (toum) and the so-called "sweet sauce" – usually a concoction of condensed milk and vinegar – to create the dish commonly known as a Halifax donair.

Lovely as it is to hog down on a freshly-made donair, my preference is to take it home and pop it in the oven, where that white cheese of unknown provenance can melt all over again and the soft-steamed pita turns into a crispy golden shell. Prime Time's unusually broad selection of veggie didn't stand up so well to the reheating, but the savoury meat, cheese, and bread, shelled with the different sauces, definitely lived up to our semi-fussy standards, all for less than \$15.

The next time we couldn't be bothered to eat properly, we opted for a less messy repeat and repaired to the local Burger Baron (14204-118th Ave.) to try their much-hyped veggie burger. Okay, only one person had vaunted it to us, but we were cu-

nious nonetheless.

Back when Burger Baron was a semi-regular occurrence in my life, I was devoted to the mushroom burger (washed down with a root beer shake). What would Edmonton's own Baron of Burgers make of non meat patties?

I'm pleased to say that the interior of the Burger Baron, while impeccably clean, hasn't changed much from its '70s heyday of Formica booths and brown/orange floor tiles.

The two veggie burger combos came to about \$20, a bit of a hike from what I remember when I was 17 and steep overall for fast food, but the quantity and quality remained more or less the same. The big burger was enveloped in a huge, veggie white bun decked with mustard, mayo, ketchup, relish, lettuce, pickles, big chunks of onion, and iridescent quasi-cheddar. The crispy hand-cut fries were fresh and crispy. The veggie patty – unlike the meat simulacrum of, say, the Harvey's veggie burger – was made with a secret combination of seasonings, pulses, and grains, and resembled in texture and flavour a pressed disc of chicken stuffing, though not quite so bready. It was delightfully messy, good to the last bite and very filling, so much so that my co-diner abandoned the bun and just ate its contents. She did, however, finish her fries.

I don't know if the veggie burger will supplant the Gourmet or Canadian Burger in the hearts (or colors) of Burger Baron patrons, but it's nice to know herbivores have a place at the table when it comes to Alberta's long-lived fast-food nobility.

RESTAURANT GUIDE

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DRINKING • SCOTCH (10 words)

Single Malts From Other Countries ...



GOODY MUSE: MELISSA PRIESTLEY
... CAN TASTE JUST AS GOOD.
TURNS OUT SCOTCH ISN'T THE
ONLY SINGLE MALT WHISKY
WORTH TRYING

Lately I've noticed a rash of various whiskies from all sorts of places with the term "single malt" on their labels. Single malts are closely associated with Scotland, as single malt Scotch is by far the most famous whisky in the world.

However, the term "single malt" refers to specific methods of whisky production, not a whisky's origins. Although the vast majority of the world's single malts are indeed made in Scotland, single malt whisky can actually be made anywhere in the world.

RECOMMENDED

AMRUT SINGLE MALT (INDIA): \$52
GLEN BRETON RARE SINGLE MALT (CANADA): \$90
CONNEMARA 12 YEAR OLD PEATED SINGLE MALT
(IRELAND): \$100

The "single" in the name means it's only produced at a single distillery, and only one type of grain is used – barley, in Scotch's case. The second word, "malt," means the whisky was distilled from malted grain. Malting involves soaking the grain in water for two or three days, allowing it to germinate and transform its starches into sugar, then drying it quickly by heating it with hot air. (The conversion from starch to sugar is necessary for whisky production as starch cannot readily ferment, and fermentation of the grain is required prior to distillation.)

Traditionally in Scotland, the grain is malted on the distillery's malting floor, which is a large open room with a perforated wooden floor, on which the germinating seeds are spread and regularly turned by hand with a malt shiel (shovel). Once the grain has sprouted, it is heated with smoke rising through the floor from a kiln located below. Scotch whisky production typically uses peat fires, which

imbue the grain with a distinctly peaty quality that is transferred to the finished whisky. The longer the grain is exposed to peat smoke, the peatier the whisky will be.

As you can imagine, traditional malting is a very tedious, labour-intensive process. In this mechanized age, many distilleries have switched to an automated malting process through several Scottish distilleries still use a traditional malting floor. Because peat is usually part of the malting process for single malt Scotch, many other countries who have started making single malts have also adopted the practice of peating their whiskies, but I've yet to taste a non-Scottish single malt that was nearly as peaty as some of Scotland's peat powerhouses (Ardbeg, Laphroaig, and Caol Ila). Still, any whisky that has been peated will have pungent aromas and flavours of campfire smoke, leather moccasin, and bacon fat. The other elements of the malting process – water, type of grain – also contribute to the taste of the finished product.

I was initially a little resistant to the idea of single malts coming from any place other than Scotland, as it seems like little more than marketing ploy. Single malt Scotch is highly sought-after and expensive, so a product bearing the title "single malt" will certainly borrow some of that prestige. Even though it has no bearing whatsoever on the quality of the whisky, we tend to think (erroneously) that if it's a single malt, it's got to be better than just a regular blended whisky.

That said, after tasting single malts from countries like India, Ireland, Canada and the United States, I've come to the conclusion that it's just silly to be prejudiced against the use of the term. Sure, a large portion of Scottish whiskies are single malts, but the Scottish distillers don't own the term. As with most things, it all comes down to quality – I don't really care where a single malt whisky comes from, as long as it tastes good. And trust me, some of them taste very good indeed.



agenda | the front | music | on screen | arts | sex | classifieds | the box

EVENTS

ALPACA OPEN HOUSE: WINDSOR PARK COMMUNITY HALL, 10440-17 AVE. Dec 5. Alpaca sweater sale and open house. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

ART NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS: GATES THEATRE, 642-667 120th ST. Dec 5. 7 p.m. Info: 482-2884.

ARTS MARKET: KARMA COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER, 1007 100th ST. Dec 5. Artists and artisans sharing unique gifts with local flavor. Every Sat. from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info: 267-2900.

ARTSQUAT: 2000 GATEWAY GROVE, 407 GATEWAY, 102-5 AVE. Sprout Groove to Dec 12. Show and sale. Info: 970-9064.

A CHRISTMAS PAST: RIVERFRONT HOUSE, 1115 100th ST. KITCHEN WARDROBE: 104-105 AVE. Dec 5. Saks Fifth Avenue, cookie talkie and craft making. 12 p.m.

CHRISTMAS LEAVES: LENDON COMMUNITY LEAGUE, 1025 100th ST. Dec 5. Presented by the Lendon Pottery Group. 10 a.m.

CHRISTMAS SNOW: JEFF ALLEN GALLERY, STRATHCONA SENIOR'S CENTRE, 10031 100TH AVE. Dec 5. Info: 433-5607.

CHRISTMAS TURKEY DINNER: STRATHCONA PLACE, SEMARAK, 104-105 100TH AVE. Dec 5. Info: 433-5807. www.semarak.ca

E-VILLE BOLLER: 1007 100TH AVE. EDMONTON SPORTSZONE, 1004-12 AVE. The Black Gold Bingers. 10 p.m. Info: 721-0012. Info: 482-9895.

FAIRMER'S MARKET: 1007 100TH AVE. HALL, 1018 100TH AVE. Dec 5. Free.

FREE ARTS FAIR: MARY HAGGERTY CENTRE, 9704 100TH AVE. For Projects and children on 10. Every Thu. 6:30 p.m. Info: 476-1000.

THE HANDMADE MARKET: MARY HAGGERTY CENTRE, 9704 100TH AVE. Monthly handicraft bazaar. 10 a.m.

THE HOG: 104-105 100TH AVE. Dec 5. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Info: 940-9747.

LEUMARINA: 104-105 100TH AVE. ROTATING GLASS: FIVE OR NORTH OF DEVON: 104-105 100TH AVE. Dec 5. 4-5 Thousand 10

candles light the paths of the Humidic Japanese Garden. 5 p.m. Info: www.devoncanada.ca

ME'S BREAKFAST WOODBALL: UNTERCOURCH, 1002-1004 100TH AVE. Dec 5. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Info: 482-9845. [The Road to Recovery](http://www.theroadtorecovery.com). 9 a.m. Info: 426-1818.

NEW YEAR'S EVE: DOWNTOWN CITY HALL, 101 100TH AVE. WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE, 1007 100TH AVE. Dec 31. Info: 423-2822. www.1007100th.com

NOTHING ADULTS BUT WITHOUT US: CITY HALL, 101 100TH AVE. WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE, Dec 31. A celebration for International Day of Persons with Disabilities, with guest speaker Paul Franklin. 10 a.m. Info: 496-1472.

THE SWINGING CONCERT & CHRISTMAS MARKET: QUEEN ALEXANDRA HALL, 104-125 UNIVERSITY AVE. Dec 5. With the music by the CHORAKAAN. Info: www.chorakaan.com

TAROT CARD READING: THE HAT, 103-105 JASPER, 7 p.m. every Wednesday.

WINTER'S CIRCLE: CARROT COMMUNITY ARTS COFFEE HOUSE, 975-101 AVE. Writing workshop every Tue. in month. Doors at 7 p.m.

MEETINGS

OVERCETERS: ANONYMOUS MUSCERICAL HOSPITAL, 10440-107 AVE. Weekly support meetings. Saturdays at 11 a.m. Info: 423-2546.

TOWN HALL MEETING: RIVERBEND PUBLIC LIBRARY, 440 RIVERBEND SQUARE Dec 5. This discussion of the topic of cuts to education and increase in tuition. 7 p.m.

LEARNING

ARGENTINA TANGO CLASSES WITH CRISTINA & VICENTE: ORANGE HALL, 103-105-101 AVE. Mondays at 2 p.m. Info: 955-1550. www.tangoedmonton.com

EDMONTON YO-YO CLUB: WEST EDMONTON MALL, 8887 100TH AVE. Tuesdays at 10 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

EDMONTON'S OPEN HOUSE: 101 100TH AVE. MURRAY LIBRARY, 101 100TH AVE. Murray Library: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday. www.library.ab.ca

Friday at 5 p.m.

LEARNERS DANCE: #9 KEGGARD HALL, 101 100TH AVE. 9 a.m. Info: 488-1000.

IMPROVATION AND BUDORING: PRACTICE: KARMA TASH, 201 100TH AVE. Tuesdays at 7 p.m. Info: www.karmataching.ca

PAUL SVEEN TEACHES STAND UP COMEDY: THE LAUGH SPOT, 210 100TH AVE. WHITE HALL, Mondays. Info: www.thelaughspace.com

PRAYER AND MENTAL SANITY STEPS: COLLEGE PLAZA, 103-105 100TH AVE. Dec 5. Presented by Archbishop Lavel and Professor Jim Park. 1 p.m.

SWING DANCE: #10 SUGAR FOOT STOMP: ORANGE HALL, 103-105 100TH AVE. Beginner lessons followed by dance. Every Sat. 10 a.m. Info: 488-1000.

TAO CLASSES: ORANGE HALL, 103-105 100TH AVE. Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. Info: 905-9505.

THOUGHTFUL: TWENTY DOCUMENTARY SERIES: STEPS: 101 100TH AVE. Tuesdays Every Tuesday Screening. Info: 949-0109. www.thoughtfulseries.com

WITH A LATIN TWIST: TANGO CLUB, 101 100TH AVE. Thursdays at 7 p.m. Info: 488-1000.

Salsa lessons. Thursdays. 7 p.m.-11 p.m.

QUEER

BIENNIAL WOMEN'S COFFEE GROUP: PARADY LOCA-
TION: 4 Spots that last the month. Call info: www.gayvibes.ca/group/biennialscoffee

BOOK CLUB: BOOK CLUB: WEST EDMONTON MALL, 8887 100TH AVE. Tuesdays at 7 p.m. Info: 955-1550.

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The holiday season is full of so many "dos." Like, do reconnect with old friends. Do eat and drink peppermint-flavoured everything, and do deck your house with fake icicles and phony trees. But let us not forget a few seasonal don'ts. Don't panic. Don't overdo it. And don't let yourself get Grinchy. Christmas brightens the darkest nights of the year and the best way to embrace it is to look at the gift-giving thing in a positive light. Not as a commercialized responsibility imposed upon you by corrupted traditions and corporate pressure instead, think of gifting as it should be — a thoughtful token given as an acknowledgment of the joy your loved ones provide the whole year through. So why not break free of the standard Christmas box. Of course, your fave alt-weekly is here to start the alt-brainstorming. Forget what's hot, what's expected, or what's easy. Time to put some heart back into that heartwarming present.

A good way to start is to reflect on your giftee's talents. Whether it be your spouse, sibling, or best bud, think of what amazes you about your favourite guy or gal and highlight it for them. Perhaps your loved one is a shutterbug? Or maybe they love to trave. Or you've caught them on film doing whatever it is they do best (smiling, of course). Then head down to **Vivid Print**, flash drive in hand. They can whip up any number of neat-o presentations of your photos, from a straight-up reprint on crisp, eco-friendly bamboo paper, to a stretched canvas version that will make the shot look oh-so-professional. (Prices range from \$20 to \$156 for a 12" square, depending on the treatment.) They also have funky original art from local artists — check out Bee Waeland's cute characters — if you're in a "those who can't do, appreciate" kind of situation.

If you want to inspire the musician in your life, young or old, the **KORG Kaossilator** (Gordon Price, \$240) will do the trick. What is a Kaossilator, you ask? Why, it's a dynamic-phase synthesizer. (All clear now, right?) Basically, it's all the sounds a synthesizer can make, trapped in a tiny box and played by pushing and sliding your finger across a little touch pad. Anyone can do it. So if your bro/sis is looking to change their band from alt-country to an electro-dance crew, or you just want to add to their musical toy collection, Kaossilator!

Sometimes it's hard to support a hobby or sport because your giftee already has all the basic gear. So accessorize! Most sports have a ton of

hyper-stylized accessories to choose from, especially skiing and snowboarding. You can pick up locks, socks, gloves, or the ultimate hit the hills accessory: **8088185**. Try the flashy Anon brand made by boarder-approved Burton (Plush Skateboards and Snowboards, \$110-\$150). Or you can pick up a beyond-vibrant pair of cushy **WESC** headphones (\$30-\$70).

Perhaps your friend already has a gift. And by gift, I mean the gift. Pick up some **tarot cards** to help them channel their skills (Sanctuary, \$20-\$30). Or if your friend needs a little otherworldly guidance when it comes life decisions, you could buy her a reading at the Russian Tea Room (\$22-\$50, depending on the number of sessions). Remember, one person's trash is another person's **Sylvia Browne**; so it doesn't hurt to keep an open mind.

Speaking of keeping an open mind, parents take note! If your son or daughter wants something pierced, they'll find a way to do it. Avoid infection and get bonus cool points by sticking a gift certificate for a nose, eyebrow, or labret **piercing** in their stocking (Strange City, \$22-\$50). Quickly now, before they use hand sanitizer on a safety pin and do it themselves.

If you're looking for a perfect gift for the eco-friendly, human-rights advocating, organic-vegan in your life, head down to **Ten Thousand Villages** and delight in the fact that you can go wrong within its four walls. Myself, I like the **tea sets**. They're fashionable and colourful, and your giftee can drink their fair-trade brew knowing no humans were harmed in the making of their cup (teapot, \$40, set of four cups, \$40).

Books As one friend put it, they do still exist. There is little else in the giftable realm that can so genuinely (and inexpensively) reflect a friend's passions and interests in such a concrete and enduring way. And there's a book for everyone (\$15-\$40). Popular culture philosophers will devour Chuck Klosterman's latest, *Eating the Dinosaur: Twilight Fans can fill the gaping hole left in their hearts post-New Moon* with Kelly Armstrong's *The Summoning*. The new hot mystery series is *Steig Larsson's Millennium Trilogy*. Financial geeks can get hot and bothered over *Superfreakonomics*. And if you're like me and don't know exactly what you're looking for, the good people at *Greenwoods' Bookshoppe* probably do just ask.

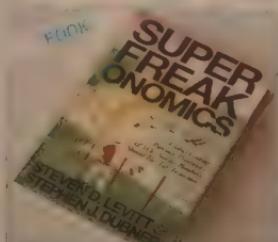
I'll admit, so far all my suggestions come with a price tag attached, but what you give this year doesn't have to cost a **Presents** cont'd on p. 16



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BLACK & GOLD

PRESENTS (cont'd from p.14)

thing. Think about what you have to offer the world and put those skills in a gift box. Be you a butcher, a baker, or a candlestick maker, a plumber, an esthetician or an artist, provide your services, sing a song, or stick a bow on some baked goods. Or you can give the gift that comes straight from the heart (via your laptop) – a mix CD. But don't just throw a bunch of songs in a list and burn the sucker; think of a theme, like "A Very Indie Christmas," or choose a collection of songs that will remind your giftee of the special times you've spent together. You can pick up a pack of 10 faux-vinyl blank CDs with cases for \$14.99 at Staples. And with a

personalized track-listing page, you've got a thoughtful, tearjerking present for around \$1.50.

And for the gift that will always live in your giftee's memory, my number one recommendation is, and will always be, an experience. I remember exactly what I got when I turned 16 – tickets to Lulith Fair. However, I have no blazin' clue what I got for my 17th birthday. It may seem fleeting, but experience-type gifts last far longer than a pair of Guess jeans. Be it a fancy meal at the Harvest Room, pottery lessons, a ski trip, tickets to a Citadel play or the U2 concert, gifts like these will never be lost to time.

So there it is. I can only hope our list makes the season just a little merrier and a touch brighter. Remember: don't fall into a spiral of cynicism (easy to do this time of year), or shop on a Saturday afternoon (nothing scarier). And no matter what you give, prove you understand not only social norms, but also your precious family members and dearest friends.

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MUSIC FEATURE • DYLAN! • BY THOMAS PATRICK PRINGLE (609 words)

Taking Everything They Can Steal

CKUA'S RESIDENT DYLANOLOGIST
DAVID WARD COMPILES A LIST OF
THE BEST VERSIONS OF DYLAN SONGS
DYLAN NEVER RECORDED

There's something about Bob Dylan - his prolific output, his magpie approach to American music traditions. His willingness to reinvent even his most famous songs at every live show - that makes him more of a walking archive than a musician.

And like every archive, this one needs its keepers, its curators, and its archivists. Veteran CKUA broadcaster David Ward has a new monthly radio show *Knockin' on Dylan's Door*, devoted to the idea of the man himself and maybe he's up for the position. "I wouldn't consider myself an expert," he says. "I would call myself a Dylan enthusiast." That's where the show lays its foundations: Bob Dylan the idea is a lot bigger than Bob Dylan the man.

For example, Ward's next show will focus on Dylan's landmark 1965 album *Highway 61 Revisited*. But Ward plans to do more than merely play a few tracks from the disc, among the topics he's planning to discuss are: Canadian director Bruce MacDonald's film *Highway 61*, the production of the album, alternate takes, a couple of covers, and the blues legacy built around the desperate stretch of tarmac called 61. "There's so many intersections with music from the last 40 years and Bob Dylan," Ward says. "He's like the hub of this big, infinitely spoked wheel and anyone who is playing music with words has passed through."

And that's by no means a grand statement. It's tough to think of anyone who hasn't heard or been affected by Dylan's output by any degree of separation. It's exactly that idea of Dylan as a huge cultural blanket that inspired Ward to do the show. Back in 2002, Dylan came through town and Ward had two pairs of tickets to give away on the radio. Instead of giving the ticket to caller number five, he extended an open invitation for the public to leave him a voicemail or send him an e-mail.

Big mistake. "By noon I had 750 e-mails and just under 250 phone messages," Ward says.

"I've been around here long enough, we've done all kinds of contests. I've never seen this for contests we've had a month to do."

Many of those messages featured personal stories labouring on the midnight shift in Medicine Hat getting stoned to Dylan, the girl whose older brother left behind a crate of records: an immigrant from the middle east who recognized "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35" while in English class and called out 'Everybody must get stoned! Everybody must get stoned!' It's comforting to think of Dylan's work as a vast network of communal campfire tunes - everybody has their own version, and everybody must get stoned.

Which brings us to those musicians who have covered Dylan. The politics of the cover is always slippery terrain can the artist bring something new to the tradition? Has some one else done a better job? Is the artist 'killing a classic'? Ward's new show isn't afraid of Dylan covers and he cites Scottish musician Dick Gaughan while making his case: "For every song that's written, we need a thousand singers, otherwise the song dies." he argued. "That's the only downside to Dylan's explosion - everyone now feels like they have to write their own songs."

Ward notes that new albums containing fresh Dylan covers come through CKUA every week, somehow, though, he was able to name his 11 current favourite covers for the benefit of *SEE* readers. But don't hold him to these choices - like the times, his list is always a-changin'.

The Low Anthem, "Dignity"

A free download to get you to sign up for their e-mail list, available last month. A really quiet and very intimate version of a song from the Oh Mercy sessions.

Johnny Jenkins, "Down Along the Cove" A late-60s Memphis soul version of a tune from 1967's *John Wesley Harding*.

Jimi James and Calixto, "Goin' to Arapahoe" A choice track from the soundtrack to Todd Haynes' impressionistic Dylan film *I'm Not*



PHOTO: SUPPLIED; ILLUSTRATION: SPYKAD/THOMAS

There. Very haunting, says Ward.

Nina Simone, "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues" Anything Simone does is fire by Ward.

Tim O'Brien, "Subterranean Homesick Blues" An old favourite and an interesting take coming out of the bluegrass world.

Beth Orton & Ward/Rodney Crowell & Emmylou Harris, "Bucket of Rain" Two interesting duet interpretations of the closing tune from *Blood on the Tracks* You don't hear many of these.

Bill Frisell, "Just Like a Woman" An instrumental to balance out the list.

Beck, "Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat" A lead, fun, raucous version, available on the

War Child Presents Heroes all-star charity album.

Rami Arbo & Daisy Mayhem, "Farewell Angelina"

A Foley/bluegrass band from Boston delivers a funny rendition of a Dylan composition first recorded by Joan Baez in 1965.

Sebastian Cabot, "Like a Rolling Stone"

Of course there's always the odd one out ... On this curios, the British actor best known as Mr French from TV's *Family Affair* delivers more of an "intoned speech" than a musical performance over a bizarre instrumental accompaniment.

The next episode of *Knockin' on Dylan's*

Door airs Friday, Dec. 4 at 8 p.m. on CKUA (94.9 FM).



Still Our SOULmate | Singer Haydnai Neale died on November 22, but his final album with his band Jacksoul will help his voice live on. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

OBITUARY • HAYDナイ NEALE (1970-2009)

If there's one thing that Canada's music scene doesn't lack, it's infrastructure. For every band, musician, or breakout pop star, there are dozens - hundreds! - of touring, struggling bands feeding this unique machine. And when we lose one of these artists, the impact is felt on the scene as a whole.

On Nov. 22, **Haydnai Neale**, the lead singer of Toronto soul/R&B group Jacksoul, passed away in Toronto at the age of 39, after a seven-month fight with lung cancer. At the time, Neale was still recovering from a 2007 incident in which a vehicle hit him while he was riding his Vespa scooter. Neale lay in a coma for a period of time, and he never fully recovered - many of his injuries followed

him until his death.

Prior to Neale's accident, Jacksoul was one of Canada's signature R&B acts. Their album *Sleekless* won a 2001 Juno for R&B/Soul Recording of the Year, and in 2007, they won the award again for *mySOUL*, an album of covers versioned by some of Neale's favourite artists, including David Bowie, Smashing Pumpkins, and Sam Cooke.

Clearly, Neale was a man of eclectic tastes, but he had a hard time getting picked up on the mainstream radar. He didn't sell Top 40 numbers, but in the Canadian soul community, he had everyone's respect. If he wasn't your favourite artist, he was one of your favourite artists' favourite artists.

Before his accident, Neale and Jacksoul began recording their fifth studio album, *SOULmate*, which was posthumously released on Tuesday. Now *SOULmate* - possibly the band's most mature effort - has evolved from "just" another soul release into a celebration of the band's 14 years together. Though no more Jacksoul material will be released in the future, Neale's family, friends, and fans will keep his sound alive through his sizeable back catalogue. As his wife Michaela said in a statement: "Through all these challenges, Haydnai's sense of humour and love of music were ever-present... His joyful presence and beautiful voice will be missed by us all." - Sean Joyner

Have Yourself A Molestic Little Christmas

MIKE SORET IS SLOWLY WARMING TO THE IDEA OF CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS WITH FRIENDS INSTEAD OF DRINKING ALONE

MIKE SORET BAND

Featuring Ben Sues, New City (Jewel Lounge) (1508 Jasper Ave.), Wed., Dec. 9 (doors at 8 p.m.).

The holiday season can be many things, a time of merriment and a time of celebration, a time of family and friends, a time to show our appreciation for all the pleasures life has given us. Or it can mean a miserable week spent in the company of our malfunctioning families, an obnoxiously cheerful reminder of why Christmas is not the most wonderful time of the year.

Mike Soret, former frontman of the veteran Canadian punk/swing band The Molestics, is definitely one of those people who finds Yuletide ... well ... interesting. "I can relate a lot to Festivus," he says, referring to the misanthropic anti-holiday invented by Seinfeld's Frank Costanza. "I spent every Christmas in the cubbyhole under the stairs while my Ukrainian family got drunk and fought the whole night long. I think a lot of people from Edmonton can

relate to that."

"Before the band," he continues, "I put on a medieval Christmas pageant called *The Second Shepherd's Play* for seven consecutive years as a way to forget to my Festivus-like Christmas. I had to go back 600 years to find a time where I didn't like Christmas! When I was in The Molestics, I had a traditional Christmas — turned off the lights and tried to drink myself to death. That was a ritual I picked up from a friend who had it as a New Year's tradition. I've never gone out for New Year's before or since the band Christmas. It's a time for friends and family, and if your memories of friends and family are like mine, your ritual will be the result."

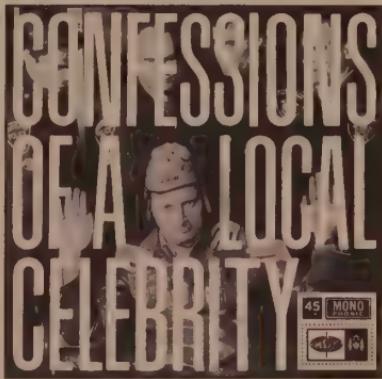
Luckily Soret's Scroogelike personality is tempered by his flair for showmanship and his ability to engage an audience — both onstage and in print. His memoir *Confessions of a Local Celebrity* (recently published in a beautifully designed paperback edition, the precise dimensions of a 45 single) by Edmonton's Belgravian Press) is a highly readable, self-deprecating, laugh-out-loud funny tale of life as a musician in Vancouver. Most of the book covers The Molestics' Vancouver glory days in the late '90s, when the band was popular

enough for Soret to achieve a limited amount of local fame. The Molestics were heavily influenced by "hokum jazz," a style of music built on farce and slapstick humour that laughs in the face of "real" music, and he brings the same healthy disrespect for literary writing to *Confessions of a Local Celebrity*. But who cares about critical prestige so long as you're entertaining your audience?

"It's the job of the entertainer to be interesting ... to be entertaining," he says. "It doesn't matter if the audience likes you or dislikes you, whether you lose them or the music gets them — those are just subgenres. The main qualifier is that it entertains them. Somehow, probably because it's really important to me, I can entertain people I entertain even if it is not entertaining at all!"

"I'll even tell you a secret: I shouldn't even tell you the trick, but I will. Here it is: you got the microphone, so you've got this advantage. Everyone came to see you and you've got the microphone. If someone isn't having a good time, you can break them down. And then I encourage people to drink. It works for me. Why the hell not have a good time? Isn't that what you came for?"

Perhaps Soret learned a few things



Makes A Perfect Christmas Gift! You can buy your copy of Mike Soret's *Confessions of a Local Celebrity* through the Belgravian Press (www.belgravianpress.ca). IMAGE COURTESY OF THE BELGRAVIAN PRESS.

about entertainment in that childhood cubbyhole, listening to the muted sounds of inebriated relatives and witnessed tortured holiday rituals. There's no question that he looks at the holidays differently now than he did years ago, this year, Soret says he no longer wants to be alone over the holidays.

"I'll make Christmas better for everyone by absolving the crowd of their dysfunction," he says. "The role I play onstage says that it's okay to be screwed up after what we all went through. Might as well make the best of it."

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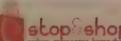
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Is This Band "Too Polished To Be Popular"?



Jones Addiction | Even with a new decade looming, the members of Chasing Jones wish they could return to the '90s. PHOTOS: KIMBERLY

LOCAL BAND CHASING JONES IS PURSUING RADIO PLAY, BUT RUNNING AWAY FROM THE DRUDGERY OF DAY JOBS

CHASING JONES

at Radio for Hits, Define the Line, Seventh Rain, Red Thread, Avenue Theatre (1030-108 Ave.), Sat., Dec. 5 (doors @ 6:30pm). Tickets: \$10.

"I think you find out pretty early on in your life that the nine-to-five work for the man and come home ... is not going to work for you," says Chasing Jones' Nick DiLullo.

DiLullo and the rest of local band Chasing Jones don't like the whole idea of work; it just gets in the way of

playing music. Even their name expresses their disdain for the drudgery of the world day - keeping up with those proverbial lemons.

Maybe that's why their music channels the '90s, a time when their responsibilities were minimal and the soundtrack to their carefree days was supplied by the Gin Blossoms and Third Eye Blind. "That's what I like about '90s music," says drummer Blair Brown. "You listen to a song and you can remember a specific time and what you were feeling."

"It's just feel-good ... a lot of our best memories trace back to the sweet '90s," DiLullo adds. He formed Chasing Jones a couple of years ago

with his brother Adam after years of playing in separate bands. Brown, a longtime friend, joined the band after hearing a demo of their first EP *The Lie* when he returned to Edmonton after a three-year stint in L.A.

Chasing Jones' stock is on the rise. Name a venue in town smaller than a professional hockey rink, and odds are they've played it. (The Pawn Shop on Whyte is a band favourite tree beer!) Their new single, a bouncy "Poxy-Six sugar hit called 'Anniversary,'" hasn't made it onto local radio yet, but a few stations in on the secret seem to like it. "For indie bands, sounding bad [production-wise] is cool in Edmonton right now," Brown says. "In a lot of ways we're a little too polished, too produced for what's popular. You shouldn't have to sound bad. You can have something clean it up ... but have the drums in time. I grew up listening to The Beatles, they don't sound bad."

The band is working on their second CD, with a tentative February 20 release date. "The new record is a much better representation of the band than the first," says Adam DiLullo. "The first record, Blair didn't write any songs. Dwayne Ulliac wasn't even in the band. It was just mostly Nick's thing. We all wrote

these songs, we're all playing on them, it's a much better vibe." While the CD is still untitled, they joke that it should be called *Thank You El* because half the band is between jobs. And they just might stay that way.

falling into a workday rut is not an option. "Playing music is the best life - although it someone tells you they're loading amplifiers in '40, they're lying," Adam laughs. "But I can't imagine doing anything else."



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Excavating Unearth's Essence



Physical Graffiti | The writing's on the wall for New England metalcore band Unearth. PHOTO: COURTESY OF METAL BLADE RECORDS

METALCORE SINGER TREVOR PHIPPIS SAYS HE'S NOT A PREACHER OR A POLITICIAN — BUT HE IS A SHOPPER

LINEUP

W/ Hatebreed, Cannibal Corpse, Hate Eternal, Born of Chaos. Edmonton Event Centre (WEM), Sun., Dec. 6 (doors 8:30pm). Tickets \$32, available through Ticketmaster (403-8000000/ticketmaster.com).

The colossal success of Metallica in the early '80s was a huge inspiration to many a young headbanger who imagined instant fame and fortune could be theirs as well. (Of course, most of those heads wound up having careers less like Metallica and more like Anvil.)

But not everyone was convinced

of the supposed ease of metal superstardom. "When we started the band back in 1998, we weren't cursed with a metal band's usual fantasies," says Trevor Phipps, lead vocalist and songwriter of the Massachusetts metalcore band Unearth. "I mean, we never had aspirations to become the new Metallica."

Without such Cinderella fantasies to motivate them, what has enabled Unearth to hold their own in the competitive genre of metalcore for more than a decade now? Their political convictions, perhaps? After all, the band's four full-length albums, most recently 2008's *The March*, are filled with songs questioning government, politics, and organized religion. Nope, that's not it. "I'm not a preach-

er or a politician," Phipps says. "The message behind the songs isn't the most important thing. I don't really think lyrics should be forced down people's throats. People can take it or leave it. We began Unearth because we wanted to play music that we liked. If others didn't like it, then we would've needed to get real jobs."

Not the lyrics, then. Maybe it's the character-building rigour of the road? Their current gig, opening for Hatebreed on their *Decimation of the Nation* tour, makes 25 stops in 27 days between November and December. "The only way to build a solid, dedicated fanbase is to tour and show your face to people time and time again," Phipps says. "We've been touring full-time since 2001 because it's the best way to have people believe in what we're doing. We are maturing because we always have goals to strive for, small steps to reach for. This is a band about partying and making the most of our time on the road. We're just down-to-earth dudes who like to have a good time."

Now we're getting closer to the truth. Could it be that the fearsome-sounding Unearth crew is really just a bunch of tourists at heart? Why else would they be looking forward to their upcoming stopover in Edmonton? "The last time we played Edmonton, we had the best day ever at the best mall in the world, West Edmonton!" Phipps says. "We usually have nothing to do on tour because most of the clubs are in the ghetto. It's a cool tour stop because the mall has everything: waterpark, gun range, ice skating, trampoline, movies — even poker."

Having just celebrated the consumer delights of WEM, Phipps doesn't seem to sense the irony as he describes Unearth's future projects. "We want more of a theme on the next record," he says. "The current economic state of the world being in shambles will come into play within our lyrics. So far, the riffs on the table are slower and darker than on *The March*."

So maybe Unearth doesn't see themselves as the next Metallica. But who knows? We'll have to check back with them next fall to see if they've created a metalcore *Master of Puppets*.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 5 FTWK CD RELEASE PARTY JUNIOR BROWN DAN DACOSTA

W/ Hatebreed, Cannibal Corpse, Hate Eternal, Born of Chaos. Edmonton Event Centre (WEM), Sun., Dec. 6 (doors 8:30pm). Tickets \$32, available through Ticketmaster (403-8000000/ticketmaster.com).

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WILDLIFE FISH GROWING SKIN

THE CITY STREETS SEND FISH A FRIENDLY MISSIVE FROM MONTREAL, AND THE ESO POSTS A SURPLUS

One of the many noble things we lost from our realm this year was *The City Streets*. I just had a back-and-forth with Matt Leddy and Rock Reid, now based in Montreal and feeling incubation pains. Reid describes their ups and downs

reveries and epiphanies talking to French girls at various soirees throughout Greater Montreal. Working shitty jobs. Matt's doughnutmaster' at Pizza Hut. I'm delivering flyers in Montreal suburbs even more hideous than Edmonton's. L. Cohen and *Godspeed*. Ran into Win Butler from Arcade Fire a couple times during Pop Montreal, nice guy. Ran into ex-E-towners on St. Laurent. Showed some friends that flew out to visit a good time.

"We miss our dogs, our families, the old house. Our new album, *The Jazz Age*, is mastered and safely home, and we are very proud. Can't wait for everyone to hear it. We fly back to E-town on the 15th, with shows on Dec. 23 (New City Suburbs) and Dec. 30, with our friends

drums. This news came from Pat Bourne in the midst of a party, tenured on the consumption of bacon-flavoured vodka, sneaked up from Seattle. The drink was, as we expected, total shit especially mixed with VR instead of clam for mystery reasons.

Still, we must experience it all or why live? All these worlds are yours."

Happy second birthday to *The Express*, where Bombchall vloozed it up Tuesday in celebration, reverting the space back to the old Pig N Whistle in a way only this band could. I extra-love Mike Park's songs about being Mike Park, with his even ever-misceivable New York White narrative vibe. The CKUA

mostly as a thank-you to all their supporters who pull together about \$2 million a year.

While congratulations are I suppose in order, what bothered me about the announcement is that such a statement would only happen in Alberta, where the arts are just such a fucking target and need to be constantly justified in terms of economic viability.

Culture's main value is not economic. I'm tired of all these aging

yabberjaws who can't get such a simple idea through their heads that money is not the exclusive way to represent and discuss a thing's worth (that just isn't). It's pathetic the indoctrinated arts in this province has to fight so hard to justify themselves in these narrow ways, some me just say thanks ESO you make Edmonton more culturally valuable, period regardless of how much you weigh on the meat scales.

I'M TIRED OF ALL THESE AGING YABBERJAWS WHO CAN'T GET SUCH A SIMPLE IDEA THROUGH THEIR HEADS — THAT MONEY IS NOT THE EXCLUSIVE WAY TO REPRESENT AND DISCUSS A THING'S WORTH. IT JUST ISN'T.

"Many nights spent writing and recording songs on an 8-track the City Streets affectionately call Zoom in our lovely apartment on de Lorimier and Sherbrooke. We did a mini-tour of southern Ontario, including three shows in Toronto — two in one night — and two radio spots [Drummer Mark Chmilar] flew out for it. We miss him."

"Trying to learn French through various means. Night courses, books on tape, Rosetta stone, drunken

Myrol, Garrett Craig and Whiskeyface, Slates, and Falklands. Also, autumn was very beautiful this year."

"We're broke but lucky in so many ways, we fuck up sometimes but our hearts are in the right place."

What's coming in 2010, other than Jupiter being surrounded by monoliths and turning into a new sun? Why, a full-length from *The Get Down*, of course, with Gravy on

crowd split as soon as the band was done, lured in by DJ Grant Stovell's chanting and drumming and Philly Willey tortured us with the *leap ardy* theme as the rest of the staff figured out how to give away \$500 in travel vouchers. Kris Schindel of Smash! had the longest straw. Willey then threw on Metallica's "The Shortest Straw," perfectly.

When the ESO announced a surplus of almost \$24,000 last week it was



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Live Music

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA, 10030-102 ST. WHYTE
PETER BEELEY TPI GALLI (ST. ALBERT) THE DRUM CENTRE,
24 PERSON ST. 7010 102 ST.
STEREOS EMMONTON EVENT CENTRE (WEBC), With the
Michie City, Artic Life, and The Enve. Tickets: www.
ticketline.ca

TONMY CASH CENTURY CASCINO, 10101 FORT RD. Tickets:
www.ckm.com/ca

DJs/Club Nights

BLI GUNDAM BLACK DOG, 10101-102 ST. WHYTE AVE,
EASY DIZZ IT THURSDAYS, THE COMMON, 10034-102 ST.
WITH DJ'S Shaeve and Sonny Grimez.
HIGHER LEVEL, THURSDAYS LEVEL 1 LOUNGE, 10037
ST. 7010 102 ST.
HOP HOP AT THE HOPPY CLUB HOPPY CLUB, 10034-102 ST.
Ten his heart for DJ'S.
MITA FELLOW BUBBY'S PUB, 10250 WHYTE AVE.
PUNKA ROCK BINGO FILTHY McNASTY'S, 10510 WHYTE
AVE.
REALLY DARNED LUCKY 13, 10550-82 AVE. With DJ
Toms.
SURELY TEMPTED, 10030-102 ST. WHYTE AVE.
Door at 9pm.
THRIFTY THURSDAYS ENCORE CLUB, 1016-105 ST. WHYTE
AVE. DJ's Koenie, DJ's.
TIGHT JAMES THIGH-SHAKIN' BLACK DOG (MAIN LEVEL),
10030-102 ST. WHYE AVE. With DJ's and Dj's.
TOPLESS SYSTEMS BLACK DOOR (ENDER LEVEL),
10125 WHYTE AVE.
URBAN SURSTANCE THURSDAYS GINGER SKY LOUNGE,
5955 102 ST.

10442 whtve ave 439.1273



FRIDAY

Live Music

THE CIVIL SAVAGE BREWERY, 10100-102 ST.
WITH COOKS AND THE KINGS, 10030-102 ST.
TOM HOGAN HOLLOW, 10030-102 ST. WHYTE AVE.
BILL MCFADDEN DRINKERY THEATRE, 10035-102 ST. 7010
102 ST.
THE PLASHUM PUNK SHOP, 10125 WHYTE AVE. ED
COOK, AND THE KINGS.
FRANKEE MCQUEEN BROC BAR & GRILL, 10030-102 ST.
WHYE AVE. 7010 102 ST.
HEAVYHED, 10100-102 ST. WHYTE AVE.
ILL SCARLETT STUDIO ROOM, 10030-102 ST. WHYE
AVE. 7010 102 ST.
JAZZ CAFE, 10030-102 ST. WHYE AVE.
KARMA CENTRAL GENTIL BAPTIST CHURCH, 10030-102 ST.
WHYE AVE. 7010 102 ST.
MISTER LUCKY PUB AND GRILL, 10125 102 ST. WHYE
AVE.
ROAD 772, SPRUCE GROVE, 430 pm. Info: 981-5887.
THE NYLONS, FESTIVAL PLACE, 100 FESTIVAL WAY, WHR-
WOOD PARK, 10100-102 ST. WHYE AVE. Tickets: www.festivalplace.ca
NATHLESS PUNK BROC BAR & GRILL, 10030-102 ST.
WHYE AVE. 7010 102 ST.

DJs/Club Nights

BLI GUNDAM BLACK DOG, 10100-102 ST.
WHYE AVE.
BEER FEST FRIDAYS LUCKY 13, 10550-82 AVE.
CALLING ALL JUNGLISTS STUDIO ROOM, 10030-102
ST. 7010 102 ST.
TIGHT JAMES THIGH-SHAKIN' BLACK DOG (MAIN LEVEL),
10030-102 ST. WHYE AVE.
DANCE HALL REGGAE NIGHT 100 DEGREES, 10100-102
ST. WHYE AVE. 7010 102 ST.
DESTROY RUCKA RUCKA, 10100-102 ST. WHYE AVE.
DU MOYAN NEWCASTLE PUB AND GRILL, 10100-102 ST.
WHYE AVE.
EDITION TOONIN' BUBBY'S PUB, 10250 WHYTE AVE.
DJ SEXXXY 9005 BART, 10100-102 ST.
FORBIDDEN FRUIT, 10030-102 ST. WHYE AVE.
FORTUNE FRIDAYS BANHAI, 10100-102 ST. WHYE AVE.
FREE AND FRESH FRIDAYS BLACK DOG (TOP
LEVEL) 10125 WHYTE AVE. With Max & French & Free the
Dance.
I LOVE 80'S 10030-102 ST. WHYE AVE.
MINI-FUNK FRIDAYS THURSDAY AFTERNOONS, 10030-102
ST. WHYE AVE. With DJ Sonny Genn.

SATURDAY

Live Music

AKA LOUNGE, 10010 JASPER AVE. With the
Minimous.
BLACK UMFOLOSI FESTIVAL PLACE, 100 FESTIVAL WAY



think Balance

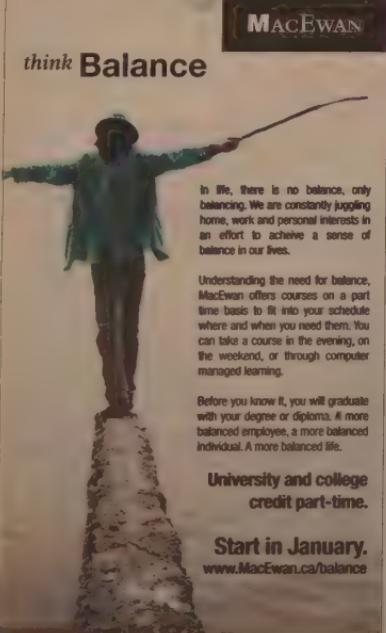
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NATHLESS PUNK BROC BAR & GRILL, 10030-102 ST.
WHYE AVE. 7010 102 ST.

REALLY DARNED LUCKY 13, 10550-82 AVE. For 18+.

REVERSE FESTIVAL PLACE, 10100-102 ST. WHYE AVE.

SACRIFITIUM 10100-102 AVE. GRILL, 10100-102 ST. WHYE
AVE. The Smoky Roads and guests. 9 pm.

THOM BENNETT 'SWEET' CAFE, 10404-102 ST.

TURBO TUESDAYS BLACK DOG (TOP LEVEL) 10125 WHYTE AVE.
With DJ Sonny Genn.

SUNDAY

Live Music

BLUEROB NORTH THE HAVER, 10100-102 ST. WHYE AVE.
CELTIC FESTIVAL, 10100-102 ST. WHYE AVE. Tickets: www.thesfestplace.com

CELESTINE BAPTIST CHURCH, 10100-102 ST. WHYE AVE.

CHILLIN' ON THE COAST, 10100-102 ST. WHYE AVE.



MOVIE REVIEW • DOCUMENTARY • BY PAUL MATWYCHUK | 105 WORDS

Oh, What A Tangled Web Of Weaves

IN HIS NEW DOCUMENTARY *GOOD HAIR*, CHRIS ROCK FINDS OUT THAT BLACK WOMEN WILL DO ALMOST ANYTHING IN THE NAME OF BEAUTY

GOOD HAIR

Directed by Jeff Stilson. Starring Chris Rock. Opens Fri. Dec. 4.

★★★★½

A thousand dollars?" Chris Rock exclaims, incredulous. "A thousand dollars?"

"It starts at a thousand dollars," comes the reply. "You can go as high as \$3,500."

Rock is talking to the owner of a black beauty salon about weaves, just one of the complex rituals of female African-American hair care that he explores in the amiable new documentary *Good Hair*. And the cost of the weave is only the beginning as the salon owner explains, you'll need to come in every week or two to wash and condition it and every six weeks get it retightened. A top-quality weave will require you to spend upwards of six hours in the chair, and some of the women Rock interviews in the film get a new weave every couple of months. One woman flew to New York from Colorado just to get her hair done. Some of the women in the film are actresses and models from whom you can expect a certain amount of diva behaviour, but plenty are ordinary black women who are somehow maintaining a hugely expensive hair habit on a working-class salary.

As a white Ukrainian-Canadian with no hair at all, all this came as stunning news to me. But Chris Rock seems just as stupefied. "Your clientele is more hooked on than cocaine!" he tells the salon owner. He points to one customer, a schoolteacher, who's been getting weaves for 10 years: "If she had a drug habit, she'd have been to rehab by now! Even a bad drug addict has periods of sobriety!"

Rock was inspired to make *Good Hair*, he says, when one of his young daughters asked him why she doesn't have "good hair." "Now where'd she get that idea?" Rock says in the voiceover. And so, he and director Jeff Stilson go looking for answers. He visits all sorts of beauty salons and barbershops, he travels to



Rock, Caper, Scissors | Chris Rock gets to the bottom of black women's obsession with the tops of their heads. *Good Hair* PHOTO COURTESY OF INDEPENDENT ATTRACTIONS

a factory in South Carolina that manufactures "relaxer," the highly caustic chemical that artificially straightens black hair (upon spotting a huge vat containing 7,000 pounds of relaxer, he remarks, "This'll last Prince about a month"); he travels to India, where much of the hair that gets turned into weaves is collected from Hindu temples, and he visits the Bronner Brothers Hair Show, a twice-yearly hair product trade show that culminates with the country's top stylists competing in an over-the-top "hair battle" for bragging rights and \$20,000 purse.

Rock never quite answers his question from the top of the film – he seems reluctant to confront head-on the political implications of what it means that the vast majority of black women, even role models like Michelle

Obama or Condoleezza Rice are spending so much money to model their hair according to a white, European standard of beauty (*Good Hair*'s chief spokeswoman for natural hair is actress Tracie Thoms from *Grindhouse*, who notes how strange it is that simply keeping her hair the same texture as it grows out of her head is considered revolutionary). He's not an aggressive interviewer by nature, and he seems to enjoy the company of his subjects too much to condemn them.

But in his low-key, non-confrontational, very likable way, Rock does make points: relaxers are incredibly unhealthy, weaves are outrageously expensive, and almost none of the corporations selling them to the black community are owned by blacks themselves. In perhaps the film's funniest scene, he playfully floats the

theory that weaves are running thousands of black marriages – when black women won't allow their men ever to touch their hair, not even during sex, should we be surprised when those men go running to white women?

Even if *Good Hair* doesn't quite feel like the definitive word on its subject, it's still a great subject – and Rock knows it. He also knows when to stand back and let the images speak for themselves – for instance, during hairstylist Derek J's routine at the Bronner Brothers hair battle, which has to be seen to be believed. And he knows it would be futile to expect women to change their ways. As Ice-T notes at the end of the film, "Do whatever makes you feel good. If a woman ain't happy with herself, she ain't gonna bring nothing but pain, **every-fucking-body** around her."

DVD DICTATOR • THESE ARE THE MOVIES YOU MUST BUY THIS TUESDAY

MOVIE

World's Greatest Dad

CAST | Robin Williams, Daryl Sabara

With such a string of unbelievably terrible movies to his credit – *License* || *Wed. With Adams*, *Death* || *Smoochy*, *Man of the Year*, *Father's Day*, at least a dozen more including his current abomination *Old Dogs* – The Dictator wouldn't blame you for avoiding Robin Williams movies for the rest of your life. But give this one a chance: It's a black comedy written and directed by Bobcat Goldthwait about a failed writer who gets an unexpected dose of literary notoriety when he composes a fake suicide note for his inosomous son, who has died of autoerotic asphyxiation.

MOVIE

AK 100: 25 Films By Akira

Kurosawa

DIRECTOR | Akira Kurosawa

This stunning centennial box set from Criterion captures the full sweep of the Japanese master director's career: 25 films in all, from his 1943 debut *Sanjuro* || his 1993 swan song *Madadayo*. The familiar classics are represented here (*Seven Samurai*, *Inuji*, *Rashomon*, *Yojimbo*, *High and Low*, *Throne of Blood*), but also such costumed merriment as *Red Sorgham* for *Our* *Youth*, *One Wonderful Sunday*, and *The Men Who Stare on the Tiger's Tail*. The Dictator has already let his loved ones know he wants it for Christmas.

MOVIE/BOOK

Lost: The Complete Fifth Season

CAST | Matthew Fox, Evangeline Lilly, Josh Holloway, Terry O'Quinn

As if there weren't enough crazy shit happening on everyone's favourite tucked-up TV island, time travel got added to the mix during *Season Five*: along with about a dozen new characters, The Dictator stopped being able to follow the plot of this show about halfway through *Season Three*, but he keeps watching, largely on the strength of the excellent cast – especially Jeremy Davies, perfectly cast as twitchy, ill-fated scientist Daniel Faraday, and Josh Holloway, getting his best showcase yet as con man Sawyer.



Parents' Gamble | Writer/director Robert Zemeckis and star Robin Williams pose on the set of the hopefully-eclectic dark comedy *World's Greatest Dad*. PHOTO: (C) 2009 BY MAGNIFICENT PICTURES

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MOVIE REVIEW • NEOREALISM • BY MICHAEL HINGSTON (500 words)

Man Gets Bike, Man Loses Bike



Spokesmen for *The Working Class* | Lamberto Maggiarini and Enzo Staiola had better enjoy their new posse sign while they can, after all, they're in a movie called *The Bicycle Thief*. PHOTO SUPPLIED

THE PLOT OF THE BICYCLE THIEF IS SIMPLE, BUT ITS EMOTIONAL POWER COULDN'T BE MORE TIMELY

THE BICYCLE THIEF

Directed by Vittorio De Sica. Starring Lamberto Maggiarini, Enzo Staiola, Lianella Carell, Metro Cinema (Ziegler Hall), The Strand, Fri-Tues, Oct 4-8.

★★★★★

For its first 20 minutes, Vittorio De Sica's 1948 Italian classic *The Bicycle Thief* is a suspense film of the most basic ilk. We see the down-and-out Antonio (Lamberto Maggiarini) get offered a job putting up posters for the city, on one strict condition: he needs a bicycle. Along with his wife Maria (Lianella Carell) and distant son Bruno (Enzo Staiola), Antonio proceeds to hock nearly everything they own in order to buy one secondhand. Bruno helps him clean the thing up, and the next morning Antonio pedals happily off to work, ecstatic at being able to provide for

his family once again.

What gives the next few scenes, breezy as they may be, such nail-biting intensity is a combination of two things. First is the film's title, which spills out the inevitable: Antonio's good luck is about to swiftly reverse itself. Second is De Sica's perverse determination to let the bike coyly slip out of the frame as often as possible, each time eliciting the same gasp from the audience: "You fool, Antonio!" we shout, or murmur, or curse inwardly. "Don't ask that punk kid to watch it for you!" But then the bike keeps reappearing, mercifully intact — until the one time it doesn't, this time plucked from plain sight, from the middle of the frame.

Of course, *The Bicycle Thief* isn't really a suspense film. It fails solidly in the genre of neorealism, which basically means its mission is to show the gritty nuances of the human condition that Old Hollywood glosses over. Accordingly, the world of the film doesn't bend to Antonio's

will just because he is a good man wronged. On the contrary, most of De Sica's Rome is a downright pain in the ass, from the street toughs who send Antonio and Bruno careening down the wrong alleyway in pursuit of the thief, to the largely indifferent police department, which does all it can to frustrate Antonio into finding the bike himself.

That's not to say there's no fun to be had in the working class. Most of *The Bicycle Thief* shows Antonio and Bruno in various states of despair and injustice, but they're both on the whole optimistic people. And there's at least one scene of pure exuberance, when Antonio treats his son to a fancy meal. It's obvious that they're much scruffier than the rest of the clientele. They don't care. An Antonio greedily gulps down his wine, while Bruno stretches each bite of mozzarella bread as far as he can, letting long trails of cheese grow taut and then snap back. For this all-too-brief moment, they're millionaires.

Many critics have argued that De Sica's masterpiece resonates as powerfully as it does because its struggle is timeless: we all want to provide for our loved ones, and we all know what it's like to feel as though the solution to all our problems has been plucked out from under our noses.

In fact, at the same time it's being screened by our own beloved Metro Cinema, *The Bicycle Thief* is getting a revival in New York's arthouse cinema circuit for this, the film's 60th anniversary. According to the *New York Times*, that's because the tale of a despairing job hunter finds home for a lot of Americans these days; we'll see if some of that sentiment will translate here this weekend.

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MOVIE GUIDE • WHAT'S PLAYING IN THE THEATRES

OPENING THIS WEEK

ARMORED

Matt Dillon, Jean Reno, Laurence Fishburne, and Columbus Short star in *Veteran* director Nirmal Antal's action flick about a group of armoured car guards who hatch a scheme to make off with a multi-million-dollar cargo shipment.

THE BICYCLE THIEF

Lamberto Maggiòriani and Enzo Staiola star in Umberto Sironi's *Il Ciclone* (1948), neorealist masterpiece about a poor Italian father searching the city for his stolen bicycle, without which he will lose his job in Italian with English subtitles. *Metro Cinema*: Dec 4-8 (Fri, Sun, Tue @ 7pm; Sat, Mon @ 9pm)

THE BIG LEBOWSKI

Jeff Bridges, John Goodman, and Julianne Moore star in the Coen Brothers' 1988 cult classic about a bum-out L.A. bowling enthusiast who winds up in the middle of a complex kidnapping plot. *Gameau Theatre Sat, Dec 5 (9pm)*

BROTHERS

Tobey Maguire, Natalie Portman, and Jake Gyllenhaal star in *In America* director Jim Sheridan's drama, based on the 2007 Danish film, about a volatile love triangle involving a young woman, her soldier husband, and her brother-in-law.

EVERYBODY'S FIN

Robert De Niro, Kate Beckinsale, Drew Barry-

more, and Sam Rockwell star in *Walking Ned* Devine director John Jones' drama, based on the 1990 Italian film, about a widower who goes on a cross-country trip to visit his four children, all of whom have been keeping secrets from him about their lives.

GOOD HAIR

Comedian Chris Rock explores African-American women's intense relationship with their hair, as well as the surprisingly large and lucrative business of relaxers and weaves, in this humorous documentary directed by Jeff Stinson.

THE MIRROR

Igor Daniltsev, Margarita Tereshova, and Larisa Tarkovskaya star in Andrei Rublev's

charter study of a man contemplating his life before, during, and after World War II in Russia with English subtitles. *Metro Cinema*: Dec 4-8 (Fri, Sun, Tue @ 9pm; Sat, Mon @ 7pm)

ALSO PLAYING

AN EDUCATION

The type surrounding Carey Mulligan's performance as a 16-year-old girl in early 60s London who enters a romance with a shifty older man is justified — she's vibrant, charming, and intelligent. The type surrounding this well-made but overplayed film, however, is a tad overblown.

★★★☆☆

FANTASTIC MR. FOX

Wes Anderson's children's film may be the most purely enjoyable thing he's ever done — from George Clooney's vocal performance as a vulpine master thief to the painstaking set and costume design, to the herky-jerky stop-motion animation, it's a total delight.

★★★★★

PRECIOUS: BASED ON THE NOVEL "PUSH" BY SAPPHIRE

Often grueling but ultimately illuminating drama about a teenage girl's struggle to find self-worth despite her status at bottom of the social totem pole — she's African-American can obese, illiterate, abused, pregnant. Don't get that bizarre title, though.

★★★★☆

SHOWTIMES, DECEMBER 4-10, 2009

GARMEAU

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AN EDUCATION

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THE GOOD HAIR

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COCO BEFORE CHANEL

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PARKLAND

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THE TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON

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THE TWILIGHT SAGA: ECLIPSE

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THE TWILIGHT SAGA: BREAKING DAWN - PART 1

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THE TWILIGHT SAGA: THE NEW MOON

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Rear View Memoir Meet The Parent

Liev Schreiber (left) and Robert De Niro in *Everybody's Fine*. PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF PITT

THE IMPRESSIONISTIC ESSAY THE MIRROR IS TARKOVSKY AT HIS MOST DIFFICULT ... AND MOST BEAUTIFUL

THE MIRROR

Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky. Starring Margarita Terekhova, Oleg Tarkovsky, Lilia Tarkovsky. Metro Cinema (Zedee Hall, The Gladde). Dec. 4-6.

★★★★★

Describing Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* is like giving a detailed recollection of a labyrinthine dream. This makes the Russian auteur's autobiographical, stream-of-consciousness 1975 film a hard sell – everyone knows there's nothing duller than listening to someone talk about their dreams. But Tarkovsky is well aware of this. At one moment, the film's narrator says, "Words can't really express a person's emotions; they're too inert." As *The Mirror* is told in a language of images, it's both difficult and profoundly rewarding to attempt to grasp this language, which we're not used to communicating in.

In *The Mirror* time is fragmented; it jumps between pre-war Russia, World War II, and the 1960s. It's also a structural mash-up – of memory, poetry, history and dreams, among other things – but put together so fluidly as to capture the wandering consciousness of its narrator, Alexei (voiced by Innokent Smekhov, who's never seen). His mother (Margarita Terekhova) features prominently in his memories, especially those from his childhood. In the postwar 1960s, Alexei clashes with his ex-wife (also played by Terekhova, further muddling the film's conception of time). Actual World War II footage is cut in periodically. Several of Tarkovsky's father's poems are read on the soundtrack. And it's almost impossible to give more of a plot summary than this without describing each individual scene.

It makes for a difficult first viewing experience, but the structure is crucial: with no temporal flow, Tarkovsky tries to achieve timeless-

ness, and perhaps even immortality. There's no cycle of birth, life, decay, and death. Instead, the central figure is on his deathbed in the middle of the film, and at the end, his father and his mother lie in the grass, his father asking whether she wants a girl or a boy.

Though the film jumps through time, it's clearly planted in a moment – the moment of remembrance – and everything happening in the film twists and pivots around it. You can almost feel the distance between each scene and the present. Tarkovsky somehow making time into something tangible.

To this effect, the true star of *The Mirror* is Tarkovsky's camera, which moves so organically it feels alive. The movement and cuts are not in service of a story, and they don't attempt to represent something, but to be something. The camera reflects the way the human mind glides through memory. Quiet, meandering, hypnotic – it's like the reveries of childhood we experience when we close our eyes. In the pre-war scenes, especially, as the fatherless family has left the city to live in a dacha in the woods, the screen is dominated by nature: by greenery, and human figures are often framed by it, sometimes lost in it. It speaks to the way many people engage with the world in childhood, through their experiences with nature, and these are the memories that persist and linger.

And like the camerawork, the editing is astonishingly fluid. This is particularly true of the newsreel war footage, which could be jarring because it goes against instinct to believe that such footage belongs in a film so deeply personal and introspective. But of course Tarkovsky is right: the historical is personal. Everything in the film is intertwined because you can't separate a human life from the history, nature, and art around it, and what is most incredible about *The Mirror* is the complete picture it is able to paint with its disparate elements.

LONELY DAD ROBERT DE NIRO DECIDES TO PAY UNANNOUNCED VISITS TO ALL HIS CHILDREN IN *EVERYBODY'S FINE*

EVERYBODY'S FINE

Directed by Kirk Jones. Starring Robert De Niro, Sam Rockwell, Drew Barrymore. Opens 8:30 Dec. 4

★★★★

In *Everybody's Fine*, Robert De Niro plays Frank Goode, a lonely retired widower who rides across the country to visit his now-grown children who are too busy and tied up with their own lives to visit him. His children are played by Kyle Beckinsale, Sam Rockwell, and Drew Barrymore, but those aren't the actors who leave the biggest impression on me.

Instead, I found myself more excited by all the encounters De Niro has along the way with random strangers – a woman sitting opposite him on the Greyhound bus, an ancient guy in a diner, a supermarket stockboy, a butcher, a porter at a train station. All of these parts are played by unknown character actors, and you can only imagine how thrilled they must be to be performing a one-on-one scene in a major movie opposite Robert De Niro. So many of the iconic actors of the '70s – Jack Nicholson, Al Pacino, Dustin Hoffman – seem uninterested these days in doing anything that doesn't let them be a one-man band, but even in his most

comical paycheque-cashing vehicles De Niro has always been a generous performer, happy to share the spotlight with his co-stars, or even, if it's entirely there must be at least a dozen different actors he's gotten to play off by the time *Everybody's Fine* is through, and I can't help but think the experience invigorated him.

Not everything about *Everybody's Fine* is stimulating for the viewer. The premise – with De Niro visiting each of his kids, each of whom turns out to be hiding a secret from him – is heavily diagrammatic. The shots in which Beckinsale, Rockwell, and Barrymore briefly appear as children just as De Niro remembers them are too on-the-nose; as are the repeated images of telephone wires silhouetted against the sky. (De Niro used to make the protective PVC coating.) And it seems to take the movie about 10 minutes longer than it needs to wrap everything up at the end.

At the same time, *Everybody's Fine* does get at something real about family relationships – the way kids who don't live in the same city as their parents will lie about their lives, the way parents often inadvertently make their kids feel as though they've turned out to be disappointments. And writer/director Kirk Jones handles the individual scenes with a fairly light touch, at least by the standards of most seasonal tear-jerkers – occasionally he even lets

Robert De Niro's Persuading | left: Kirk Jones' *Everybody's Fine* is the home of his daughter, says de Niro. | right: COURTESY OF MARY PICTURES

us figure out what's really going on underneath the scene for ourselves. He emphasizes touch as the core – specifically a piano scene lifted from Giuseppe Tornatore's original 1990 Italian version of *Everybody's Fine* and which represents Ennio Morricone as his most sentimental.

With that sentimental streak and its conventionally comforting ending, *Everybody's Fine* is probably not destined to get much critical respect. But if you need a movie to watch with your parents over the holidays, it'll go over like gangbusters. And if you're avoiding your family this Christmas, it might squeeze a few guilty tears out of you too.

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RATED: PG

CULTURE, LANGUAGE, SEXUAL CONTENT

**It Might Get Loud**

Nightly @ 7:00pm
SAT & SUN
MATINEES @ 1:00pm

RATED: PG

**Coco Before Chanel**

Nightly @ 9:00pm
SAT & SUN
MATINEES @ 3:00pm

RATED: PG

MATURE SUBJECT MATTER

PRINCESS

10337 - 82 Ave

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OLIVIA WILLIAMS **EMMA THOMPSON** **CAREY MULLIGAN**
as Jenny

**"A MIRACLE OF A MOVIE!
HIGH ON THE LIST OF THE YEAR'S BEST!"**

-Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

"WONDERFUL."

-Roger Ebert, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

"DO NOT MISS IT!"

-John Griffin, THE GAZETTE

**"ONE OF THE
BEST FILMS OF
THE YEAR."**

-Rex Reed, THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

"DAZZLING!"

-Singer Moore, ORLANDO SENTINEL

"CAPTIVATING!"

-Maura MacCormac, THE SEATTLE TIMES

**"VIBRANT
AND SHARP!"**

-Cain Gavett, STAR TRIBUNE

**AN EDUCATION**

EXCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT NOW PLAYING!
Check theatre directories for showtimes

MOVIE REVIEW - REMAKE - BY MARI SASANO (50 words)

Reheated Danish

Don't Look Back in Anger | Tobey Maguire and Lake Bell are two points of a tempestuous romantic triangle in

Brotherhood. PHOTO COURTESY OF LIONSGATE

**THE AMERICAN VERSION OF
BROTHERS FEELS BOMBASTIC
WHERE THE ORIGINAL WAS
NUANCED BUT POWERFUL**

BROTHERS

Directed by Jim Sheridan. Starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Natalie Portman, Tobey Maguire. Opens Fri. Dec. 4.

★★★☆☆

angry, we are now confused and sad. "We" – and the term becomes more complicated each day – may not be strong enough and right enough for this war.

It was a radical stance in 2004 to say such things. The American version of *Brothers* is a little late to the game, but despite following its Danish predecessor pretty much step by step, context is everything. As expected, this version is a lot more bombastic in its patriotism. When an American proclaims that a soldier is a hero serving his country, it sounds different – programmed, jingoistic – than when a Dane says it.

So does this make *Brothers* '09 more powerful or less? On the one hand, chances are that this version will be seen by millions outside the arthouse crowd. Minds will be changed, and awareness raised. On

the other hand there's something not quite trustworthy about any Hollywood film about war, regardless of how well-intentioned it may be.

The plot remains the same: Tobey Maguire plays Capt. Sam Cahill, a stand-up family man and respected Marine. He is married to the lovely and devoted Grace (Natalie Portman), with whom he has two adorable daughters. It's an emotional day when Sam's brother Tommy (Jake Gyllenhaal) is released from prison because it coincides with Sam's deployment to Afghanistan. At the Cahill family dinner, one gets the impression that they are losing the "good" son to an honourable vocation, while the m'er-do-well gets to stay at home.

The brothers' roles in the family obviously have a long history, but Tommy seems genuinely humbled and willing to start again after serving time – it's hinted that the crime was violent, and that a female victim was left behind. While Sam returns to Afghanistan ("it almost feels like home," he says, hinting that not all is perfect in his household), Tommy attempts to make up for his absence, taking on a kitchen renovation project and playing with his nieces to cheer them up while their dad is away. Grace, too, notices that the "bad" son has more to him than a criminal record, and turn to Tommy for comfort when Sam's helicopter crashes in the desert.

Sam, meanwhile, survives the accident, but is taken hostage by the Taliban. He maintains a stoic attitude, chastising another soldier for revealing too much emotion. "We have no wife, no family," he warns. No surprise, then, that when Sam does come home, he has some trouble adjusting back to being a husband and father. It's a great lesson in the link between war, military training, trauma, and domestic violence.

Part of the problem may be that the cast is too known, too stacked with actors familiar from other movies. Oscar-nominated Jake Gyllenhaal fares the best, while (*Teen Choice Award-nominated?*) Tobey Maguire comes across as a slightly more mature Peter Parker, and Natalie Portman attempts to fill Connie Nielsen's shoes – but looks like a little girl playing dress-up. Maybe it's because the American *Brothers* begins with a voiceover from the soldier character, but this new version veers ever so slightly in favour of glorifying military life even though the focus of the rest of the movie is on the family, the film literally puts the soldier up front. It's a little disconcerting.

And then leave it to Hollywood to end a bombastic film with even more pomposity. U2's puffed-up power ballad "Winter" plays as the credits roll.

An Education

Nightly 7:00 & 9:00pm
SAT & SUN
MATINEES @ 2:00pm

RATED: PG

MATURE SUBJECT MATTER

**The Big
Lebowski**

SATURDAY DEC 5
MIDNIGHT

RATED: R/A
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THEATRE PREVIEW • YOUNG AUDIENCES • BY MARI SASANO | 102 words

Hansel And Gretel ... And Farren



You Don't Mess Around With Grimm | Jason Hermann and Farren Timoteo during their casting. | © ANDREW PAUL/EDMONTON PHOTOFEST

EDMONTON'S YOUNGEST ARTISTIC DIRECTOR FARREN TIMOTEOT NEVER IMAGINED HE'D BE ABLE TO MAKE THEATRE HIS CAREER

HANSEL AND GRETEL

Written by Farren Timoteo. Music by Jeff Unger. Verscena Theatre (1029-43 Ave). Dec 4-13. Tickets available through TIX on the Square (430-1757/ tixonthesquare.ca)

Farren Timoteo is the artistic director of Alberta Opera Musical Theatre for Young People, writing and directing musical theatre for young audiences. With the opening of his musical adaptation of *Hansel and Gretel* this Friday at the Verscena Theatre, he embarks on his fourth season. Not bad for a 26-year-old, and a dream come true for the young man who didn't even realize that working in the theatre was even a job.

"I never thought about a career in the arts," he says, perched on a chair in one of the Verscena's dressing rooms. "I didn't know it

worked like that, because I was inexperienced in seeing theatre. I wasn't getting out and seeing local artists making a living as artists. But when I was in Grade 12, a couple of my peers who had gone to Grant MacEwan told me about the [theatre arts] program and I said, 'Really? you can go to school for this?' It just clicked immediately. I knew I was in the right place."

The AD's first position was fate at that point — Timoteo's first acting gig out of college was in Alberta Opera's *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Garner Butler, Alberta Opera's AD at the time, recognized Timoteo's talent as an actor, and eventually as a director with *Songs from the New World* at the Fringe in 2005. Eventually he offered him the job.

"It seemed right," Timoteo says. "It was musical theatre and I wanted to direct that specifically. And after I shed my anxieties about it — well, it was terrifying, and I decided that was a good reason to do it."

As a young artist himself, it has been a steep learning curve. But Timoteo makes a point of

communing his work as an actor and writer, most notably as one of Teatro La Quindicina's stable of performers. "Alberta Opera has been really great about letting me take acting work and then it's just the task of juggling both. And it keeps me as a young artist learning and experiencing other directors and stages and methods of directing."

And working as a director, particularly for young audiences, has honed his skills. "Young audiences are fantastic," he says. "They're energetic and imaginative and they will go the distance with you, and also they are incredibly honest. You can't pull the wool over their eyes. They'll ring the buzzer on you the second you're not captivating them. It raises the bar pretty high, and I've learned a lot of lessons that definitely apply to adult audiences as well in terms of being engaged, and the dynamics of a successful show."

Hansel and Gretel is Timoteo's second new play for Alberta Opera (*Little Red Riding Hood* was his first). And this season, he debuted *Ev-*

erybody Goes to Mitzie's, a Teatro collaboration. "When I was very young," he says, "reading and writing were my first passions. But never in a million years would I have imagined myself writing. But I stand on the shoulders of those I admire: Sondheim, Neil Simon, and even more so the people I know, especially Stewart Lerman. Over the years, you notice the elements in those writers that make a play move, and the characters engaging."

Timoteo will continue to work and write for adults, but for the time being, Alberta Opera will continue to develop and be developed by this young artist. He wouldn't have it any other way. "It's exciting! From day to day, I shake my head and say, 'Wow! This is what I get to do!' From Grant MacEwan to today, the doors have always opened up. I used to try and guess where I'd end up, but if you asked me in high school, I never would've guessed I would end up in theatre. And so on. All I know is that there's nothing else I would rather be doing."



Lottery Will Get You Nowhere | More than 170 local theatre productions competed for 40 spaces in this year's Fringe draw. Morgan Smith was one of the 130 unlucky ones. PHOTO BY ANDREW PAUL

ARTS NEWS • PLAYWRIGHT MORGAN SMITH REPORTS FROM THE FRINGE LOTTERY

The 2009 Fringe lottery starts fairly unceremoniously. Local actor Amy Shostak steps to the mic and, like a junior high teacher, shushes everyone so the draw can begin.

The opening speeches are ill-behaved and sit through. The Fringe theme this year is "It's All Gray" I know, I was puzzled too, but Fringe Theatre Adventures' Julian Mayne assures the unimaginative skeptics, "It'll grow on you." I feel like jumping out of my skin and yelling, "JUST TELL ME MY SHOW IS ALREADY!"

After a slew of loopy puns, we're finally into the draw. We start with the TVA shows. Then we move to the International category.

Interminable.

The National slots start to fill up and open my phone to check the time. My friend David calls me twice in 10 minutes. I take my leave during the seemingly endless National waiting list and call him back. He gives me three shows to keep my ear out for, writes them down and slips back into my chair like a spy.

Finally, the local draw 40 names will get guaranteed slots, 40 will go on the waiting list. I subconsciously cross my fingers. Remembering I don't believe in luck, I uncross them. I make notches on my notepad, keeping track of how many spots have gone by. Periodically I hear squeals of celebration from around the room. I try not to resent their

The apex of my anxiety comes around the

20-name mark. Optimistically I think, "If I'm not drawn by now, I won't be."

At 30, I find myself hating the people onstage. And Amy Shostak is so nice, too!

35. It feels like I'm rolling downhill, gaining momentum toward disappointment...

40 comes and goes. Wait, there's four more spots? Ops, guess I lost count somewhere...

The last one... at not me. Crushed. Still hopeful, though. Maybe I'll make the waiting list, though! That's as good as being in!

The first 10 spots go by like a blur. Then the next 10. There go my chances. I guess it's time for some phone calls to get together a BYOB. But at least the application fee refund means more room on my credit card for Christmas!

Bard Refutation



Shakespeare Shakes Spears | The Amazonian Sarah Sharkey (right) invades Darren Peat and Tatyana Rac in *Goodnight Desdemona* (Good Morning Juliet). PHOTO BY JOHN VAN ANDEL/PHOTOGRAPHY

GOODNIGHT DESDEMONA TURNS TWO SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDIES INTO UPROARIOUS COMEDIES

GOODNIGHT DESDEMONA (GOOD MORNING JULIET)

Directed by Marianne Cuthbertson. Written by Ann-Marie MacDonald. Starring Tatyana Rac, Sarah Sharkey, Karen Metz, Darren Peat, Robert Marcus. Tarragon Theatre for the Arts (37 Ave & 112 St.), 932-3 Dec. 5.

★★★★★

There are two or three moments in Studio Theatre's production of *Goodnight Desdemona* (*Good Morning Juliet*) that made me laugh as long and hard as anything I've seen onstage this year. They weren't the most structurally clever bits, though the script, by the Canadian novelist and playwright Ann-Marie MacDonald, is full of these, too.

No, the bits I loved most were simple set-up-and-punchline gags — one involving a dopey Romeo realizing he's been tricked, the other a similarly aloof Juliet being caught dressed up like a boy. See? Not much in either of them. Yet these small successes, more than anything, illus-

trate the strength and vitality running amok under Marianne Cuthbertson's steady direction and conjured by a small cast of able goofballs. When this much attention is paid to even the minor jokes, you know you're in good hands.

MacDonald's play, written in 1988, is both a rewriting of two of Shakespeare's most famous tragedies and a pointed feminist attack on academia. The curtain opens on Constance Ledbury, a mouse, easily excitable assistant professor at Queen's University. Dressed like an androgynous Payne Stewart, she's working on a dissertation about how *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* were really meant to be comedies but keeps getting roped into doing her dashing boss's work for him — writing entire speeches and academic articles, all at the slightest flare of his skeevy charm.

He also tries to dissuade Constance from her project, which involves deciphering an arcane manuscript. But a mischievous Chorus figure appears out of nowhere, pulling her down the rabbit hole and deposit-

ing her smack into Othello's Cyprus and Romeo's Verona. By discovering the truth about these worlds — and in the process becoming a character within them — she will also discover herself.

It's this opening scene that gives the play its only real stumbling block. Constance at first comes off a little one-dimensional, and the students who parade through her door, not to mention Professor Handsome himself, are all fairly predictable caricatures. Once Constance disappears down that cleverly placed trapdoor, though, there's no looking back. She hits the ground running, and the production follows suit.

There's an obvious pleasure in seeing these canonical texts pulled apart and Krazy-Glued back together, and MacDonald does so with the glee of an art student drawing a moustache on the Mona Lisa. Constance first lands in Cyprus, where she promptly informs Othello of Iago's plot to have him kill his innocent wife. Newly un-murdered, Desdemona pings to life as a frenzied Amazonian warrior, swearing to help Constance in her quest to find a readable version of the manuscript until Iago enlists the Moor's wife in his new scheme, exposing Constance as a witch.

Ditto for the world of *Romeo and Juliet*, which is reimagined as a horned-up boys' club, full of bath houses and R-rated krump dancing. When Constance saves Tybalt and Mercutio's lives in their early sword fight, Romeo goes home to discover that he's not that into his 13-year-old wife after all. The feeling, it turns out, is mutual. But then both fall for a mysterious stranger, a beffled boy from another land named, er, Constanține.

The jokes come quick, and every one onstage gets a chance to lob with the best of them. (Even the white nightclub diva, a minor character who regrettably speaks like a sassy black woman, has a memorable catchphrase: "Tou li each other.") As Constance, Tatyana Rac anchors the show switching from wide-eyed babbling to straight man with ease. And Sarah Sharkey and Karen Metz as Desdemona and Juliet stay utterly in their own worlds throughout, which is all the more essential when they're thrust together at the climax.

It's definitely a female-driven show which is keeping with MacDonald's politics, but both male actors also drag big laughs when called upon. Cori Sincennes deserves kudos as well for his inventive set design, particularly a stunning blood-orange moon that dangles from the rafters.

With dancing, magic, swordfighting, cross-dressing, formal trickery and a host of belly laughs, it's a show that ought to make even old Billy S himself feel right at home.

Bitter Bison

**BERRY AND HOLINATY'S
WE HATE THIS PLACE HERE
PAINTS A LOVINGLY SELF-
LOATHING PICTURE OF
EDMONTON**

WE HATE THIS PLACE HERE: IT'S OUR HOME
By David Berry and Josh Holinaty 75 pp. \$15. Currently available at Holinaty's Clothing (1018-102 Ave) and Edm City (10416-82 Ave). Info: holinaty.com/bag.

A strange thing happens in Edmonton at Christmastime when all the friends who have moved away over the years arrive home. They're greeted as heroes, almost, holding court at The Black Dog like nothing has happened between the end of university and now. And everyone else feels kinda shitty about that. This was true 10 years ago, and it's still true now — freelance writer David Berry couldn't help notice #.

"Christmas always struck me as a conceptually odd time," he says. "People coming back, the social aspect of it, it's nice to see them but there is this 'Okay go to The Black Dog, let's get this over with' feeling about it. The other thing too, is, they change? It's a weird check-in. What have you been up to?"

Berry ran the idea of a graphic novel project with illustrator Josh Holinaty, who saw a unique opportunity. "I've always wanted to do one," Holinaty says, "but my writing skills aren't up to par. And I worked with David when he was the arts guy at VUE. He got me my first job in town. I knew that he writes well, so I knew we could trust each other's work habits to make this actually happen."

It was a new direction for Berry too. "I've never written fiction in any concerted way. Only half-dabbed. I like the writing stuff that I do, and that's what the realism thing is. I like to write about what's around me."

We Hate This Place Here: It's Our Home is the result of those discussions: the first chapter completed and sold at last weekend's Royal Bison Craft and Art Fair, a venue that stands as one of the local inspirations for the work. "Josh did some drawing for us and we had one in our Best-est issue. The Bestest Place to Spot a Hipster" was the Royal Bison Art Fair, and we were talking and thought a hipster bison would be hilarious. He did it up, and looked awesome, and those two things came together.

And so Chapter One follows a twenty-something bison in a city populated by bison. He's hungover, and he engages in a kind of self-loathing that we all will probably find familiar, both personally and collectively, as a city. "I don't think there's anything bad about it necessarily," Berry says. "You can go too far with it, but with self-loathing, part of it is being self-reflexive. You tend to focus on the



negative, but being self-reflexive is important. Especially related to the city I can't stand those people who think that Edmonton is the best city in the best province and we're world-class. No, we're not. We kind of suck. We're bad at some things, let's be honest. We're not Paris or New York. We look delusional when we say those things."

Holinaty took Berry's words and interpreted them, with the author largely trusting the illustrator to make the images work. "There were a few instances he was specific with things like maybe I could draw him smoking here, but he pretty much let me do my own thing," notes Holinaty. "For about the first half of it, I had him take a look and the only changes he requested were spelling mistakes."

Visually, Holinaty conjures a lo-fi aesthetic that seems completely appropriate of our winter city. "We had a clear idea that Alberta is kind of gritty and dirty, so we wanted it to look a bit grungy. It's the way I've evolved to draw like this, it's how I'm working lately. And through the book you can see the development of the style because I get quicker at it. By the end of the second chapter, it could look even more different."

The duo have been hand-binding the book in Holinaty's recently vacated Garneau apartment, but the hope is that they can find a publisher to do the hot-gluing for the next few chapters, which will feature other characters in bison-Edmonton. That's the flipside of our civic self-esteem: a little project does dare dream big. And it's not ironic, that the book — which is, as an object, quite good — peddles in our collective self-hatred.

"I don't think you can love something if you don't also hate it," Berry says. "Maybe I'm messed up, but I can't picture actually caring about something without being able to admit what its faults are and disliking those things. How else can you change those things otherwise? You can apply that to yourself too. He's self-loathing because he cares about how his life is going, and that's the first step towards doing something about it."

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SEX • ADVICE

A Quick Primer On CPOS, HNDs, Twinks, And Twunks



SAVAGE LOVE DAN SAVAGE

THIS WEEK, DAN ADDS A BOST OF FRESH DEFINITIONS TO THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE

I'm a longtime reader who thought I'd never have a reason to write since I'm universally known as the "good girl," but I'm not sure who else I can turn to.

I have a close male friend. Even though I knew he was dating someone else, we became friends-with-benefits several years ago. Because of his relationship (and the fact that he lives with her), I let him take the lead in setting up our rendezvous. Sometimes when we'd be together, it felt like a booty call; other times, it felt like it was leading to something more. He once admitted that if things were different, he could see us together. He never really talks about his girlfriend with me, and a while ago I discovered that while he was unfaithful to her, he had also been unfaithful to me.

He recently proposed to his girlfriend. I'm happy for him if it's what he truly wants, but I feel like he did it out of desperation. Here is my dilemma: I don't want to out myself, I don't want to hurt him, and I don't want to ruin our friendship. Dan, but I feel like she has to know what her fiancé is really like before they get married. I don't see his cheating stopping just because they've exchanged a few vows. Should I anonymously contact her and let her know that her man is a cheating man? Where? Thanks!

One Of Many Other Women

Ge ... it must have come as a real shock when you realized that a man who was capable of cheating on his live-in girlfriend was also capable of cheating on the girl with whom he was cheating on his live-in girlfriend. No one could've predicted, huh?

On to your question: I hate to think of some poor woman marrying a cheating piece of shit (CPOS) — a CPOS is not to be confused with an honest, monogamous dude (HND) — in ignorance of his cheating piece-of-shit ness. It's possible that the CPOS' fiancée already knows and has forgiven him; perhaps one of those ultimatums touched on cheating. But odds are better that this woman doesn't know, and some

one really ought to clue her in before the wedding. But should that person be you?

I'm not comfortable with your motives, OOMOW. You may be known throughout the universe as a "good girl," but your actions prove that you're something of a "bad girl." And there's more: your desire to destroy your FWB's relationship proves that you're something of a "vindictive girl," your attempt to pass your vindictiveness off as concern for a woman you've repeatedly wronged proves that you're a "self-deluding girl," and your desire to accomplish all of this without paying any price yourself — you don't want to out yourself or risk ruining your "friendship" with the man-whore — proves that you're a "selfish girl" and a "cowardly girl."

Back to your motives: the reason you want to do this anonymously is because your top concern is having the CPOS all to yourself, and that means sticking a knife in his current relationship without leaving any fingerprints. So it's a good thing — a useful thing — that you're the only "other woman" in his life, OOMOW, because he'll never know for sure which one of his other women rated him out.

Setting your highly suspect motives aside ...

If I were in the fiancée's shoes, I would want to know what was going on before the wedding. So I do think you should tell her. But if you have any shred of decency — even the tiniest bit — you will tell her personally, apologize profusely, and provide her with some proof. An anonymous tip won't cut it, a CPOS who has successfully hidden a collection of other women from his fiancée will be able to talk his way out of an anonymous accusation of infidelity. He'll either claim the e-mail was sent by a vindictive ex-girlfriend of his, which has the benefit of being very nearly true, or he'll claim that an ex-boyfriend is trying to destroy her happiness.

Finally, OOMOW, why do you want to be with the CPOS? He cheated on his fiancée, he cheated on you, and he probably cheated on the women who he was cheating on the both of you with. He's a piece of shit, his fiancée is a fool, and you're a vindictive, self-deluding, selfish coward. I'm not sure if you can all do better, but if any of you deserve better, but I do think you should all try.

I'm a hetero girl in my 20s. I love masturbating and find myself really good at it, but a lot of the time I get nothing from hetero porn. Usually it's because I can't stand the girls' annoying voices. So I

SAVAGE cont'd on p. 35

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SAVAGE (cont'd from p. 34)

rely on gay porn instead, even when I'm reading erotica. I tend to go for what you gay guys call "twinks."

I'm not really concerned, I'm just curious. Is this a common problem? I now get really intrigued when I meet gay guys in real life because I get off to so many gay men in porn. I'd love to watch two twinks in reality, but I'm not sure if any gay guys would ever be into that.

Twink Lover

Twinks are boyish gay men — boyish men, not boyish boys — in their late teens to mid-20s with slim-to-slightly-muscular bodies and relatively hairless chins, chests, crotches, etc. So long as you're getting your live-action porn from reputable porn sites and companies, TL, you don't have anything to worry about on the statutory front.

As for watching a couple of twinks go at it, there are lots of bisexual twinks out there — perhaps you could date one and have the odd three-way with others? There are also, without a doubt, some twink gay couples out there as turned on by the idea of some straight girl watching them go at it as you are turned on by the idea of watching a couple of twinks go at it. And thanks to the World Wide Interfluffer, finding them — or renting them — is easier than ever. And

speaking of twinks

However much *Playgirl* paid Levi Johnston for that photo shoot, it wasn't enough. Most people thought *Playgirl* — which ceased publishing a print a while ago — was dead and gone forever. Prior to this photo shoot with Johnston, who even knew that *Playgirl* had a website? Or that *Playgirl* had a publicist? A publicist who had this to say after the shoot: "We were talking in the green room about gay categories — bear, cubs — and Levi asked what his type would be. We decided a twink, but older, so we anointed him a twink."

I love the idea of a twink — an older twink. But Levi Johnston is 19 years old. How old is a twink supposed to be if a 19-year-old is already an adult? No, no. Johnston was never a twink. He is a high school jock — the hockey variety, to the delight of gear fetishists everywhere — gone slightly to seed. But what's more interesting than sorting Johnston into

his exact gay etymological category is watching Johnston, once a major homophobe, become increasingly comfortable with fell gays. Celebrity — and that's what he is now — means having to hang out and work with (and work for) a certain number of out homo. One of those homo's no doubt explained to Johnston that not many women would be masturbating to his pictures on *Playgirl's* website. It seems that homophobia is a luxury that Levi can't afford anymore.

And, past Levi? If you did that *Playgirl* shoot only to drive your former future mother-in-law crazy — and if that was your plan, kiddo, it seemed to work — imagine how much crazier she'll get if you do a little gay-for-pay porn.

Just sayin'

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SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22 - DEC. 21)

the first instant. Jupiter is in alignment with the sun in the south limits. You're in alignment with the sun in the south limits. Well, this time you oughta hold on a minute. If it ain't broke, don't fix it, or in this end all you'll do is fix it. Before the weekend, you'll be in alignment with the sun in the south limits. Don't rock the boat. Don't tip the boat over!

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22 - JAN. 19)

You're in the black, jolt the seat of your back and when you turn on the tide, now you're on the attack. Such a joyous occasion certainly calls for celebration, but don't forget about the moon in the south limits. This weekend, don't go and screw it over, or when Monday comes, you are gonna earn it!

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20 - FEB. 18)

If you could find a way to bottle the milk of human kindness that runs through your veins, you'd profit hands down. What would be more? You aren't that clever but nevertheless you're a natural. This is the only way that you'll succeed. You're going to be a real diva. You're going to be a real diva. You're going to be a real diva. You're going to be a real diva.

PISCES (FEB. 19 - MARCH 20)

How to make a buck and keep your heart
whole? You're in alignment with the sun in the south limits –
ain't that the million-dollar question? Well, you
may be on your way to making the million-dollar
answer soon. The recent new moon wiped
the slate clean. You now know how to
make a buck and keep your heart whole.

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 19)

Sometimes, when you have to fight for
everything you get, it seems like it don't worth
it if it don't come with lotsa sweat. In fact, you

TAURUS (APRIL 20 - MAY 20)

You're in the black, jolt the seat of your back and when you turn on the tide, now you're on the attack.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUNE 21)

Given to impulsive rather than makes' plan and gettin' set is kinda like playin' life as if you were a gambler at roulette. It's all down to the spin of the wheel. You're in alignment with the sun in the south limits. You're in alignment with the sun in the south limits. It's OK to succumb to temptation, as long as you know the aftermath you'll be facin'. If you think you can do, go ahead and spin the wheel!

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 22)

This weekend, you're going to get a little hard

for you startin' free money. What else do you

expect when you're a water sign and it's nearly

the winter? Just 'cause for a while things won't

be so great, don't let yourself get eaten up with

hate. You're in alignment with the sun in the south limits. Learn how to let it!

LEO (JULY 23 - AUG. 22)

This is one of those times when business and
pressure won't mix, and it's no use tryin' to

SCORPIO (OCT. 23 - NOV. 21)

You're in the black, jolt the seat of your back. It's

in your best interest to work inside. Especially

when it's a high-class joint like this – how

could you resist? You better accept, whether

you like it or not, you're gonna be a real diva.

It's OK to succumb to temptation, as long as

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ASTROLOGY - DEC. 3-DEC. 9 • BY THE KID

CRUISIN' THE COSMOS

can even start swiggin' at foes that ain't there and tryin' to fight off friends from ill your friends. You don't have to light no more candles, you can even go to sleep at that old trick. make your own bed, master how much you apply force, things won't gonna take that

TAURUS (APR. 20 - MAY 20)

You're in the black, jolt the seat of your back and when you turn on the tide, now you're on the attack. Such a joyous occasion certainly calls for celebration, but don't forget about the moon in the south limits. You're gonna earn it! rock the boat, don't tip the boat over!

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22 - JAN. 19)

You're in the black, jolt the seat of your back and when you turn on the tide, now you're on the attack. Such a joyous occasion certainly calls for celebration, but don't forget about the moon in the south limits. You're gonna earn it!

PICTURES (FEB. 19 - MARCH 20)

How to make a buck and keep your heart
whole? You're in alignment with the sun in the south limits –
ain't that the million-dollar question? Well, you
may be on your way to making the million-dollar
answer soon. The recent new moon wiped
the slate clean. You now know how to
make a buck and keep your heart whole.

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 19)

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be so great, don't let yourself get eaten up with

hate. You're in alignment with the sun in the south limits. Learn how to let it!

LEO (JULY 23 - AUG. 22)

This is one of those times when business and
pressure won't mix, and it's no use tryin' to

SCORPIO (OCT. 23 - NOV. 21)

Y'know Scorp, it's OK to like yourself
sometimes. In fact, right now, you're gonna
need to like yourself. You're gonna need to like
yourself. You're gonna need to like yourself.

LIBRA (OCT. 23 - NOV. 21)

When you like yourself, you're gonna like
yourself. You're gonna like yourself. You're gonna like
yourself. You're gonna like yourself.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23 - NOV. 21)

You're in the black, jolt the seat of your back. It's
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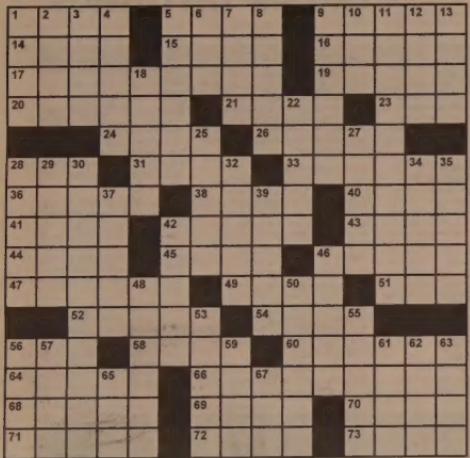
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BANK JOB

YOU'RE GETTING COLDER.

JONESIN' CROSSWORD BY MATT JONES
(©2008 Jonesin' Crosswords (editor@jonesincrosswords.com))

ACROSS

- 1 Leon Uris novel — "18"
- 5 Enter
- 9 Uses as a source
- 14 Shape of some mirrors
- 15 It now includes Lat. and Lith.
- 16 Muhammad Ali's daughter
- 17 Macho way to say "dandruff"?
- 18 How bad grades are sometimes written
- 20 Jackson or Johnson
- 21 Category for everything else: abbr.
- 23 Night before
- 24 They may get stroked
- 26 Drying-out stage
- 27 Watch chain
- 31 "Hedwig and the Angry —"
- 33 Wine refused in "Sideways"
- 35 He's a complicated man but no one understands him but his woman
- 38 Shankar on the sitar
- 40 "Slithy" "Jabberwocky" creature
- 41 Like Shaguille O'Neal
- 42 Rocky and Bullwinkle's nemesis
- 43 Graceful swimmer
- 44 Airport near Paris
- 45 2007 NBA Draft #1 pick Greg
- 46 He voices Shrek
- 47 Currency replaced by the euro
- 48 Musician descended from Herman Melville (hence the name)
- 51 "Marble" deli loaf

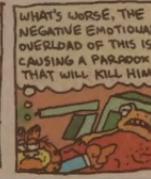
- 52 Perot, formally
- 54 Exhaled response
- 56 Blood-type system
- 58 Ticket leftover
- 60 Childbirth assistants
- 64 Fictional typing tutor Beacon
- 66 What somehow happens to the vegetables in your TV dinner?
- 68 Beyond husky
- 69 Muppet with his pet fish Dorothy
- 70 Bullring yell
- 71 Cobb, for one
- 72 "Liquid sunshine"
- 73 Word that can precede either word in 17- and 66-across and 11- and 30-down

- 72 Abbr. on a mountain sign
- 73 "No Ordinary Love" singer
- 78 For real
- 22 Mid-tournament rounds
- 25 Atlantic catch
- 27 Bohemian
- 28 Camera setting
- 29 Frequent site for flight layovers
- 30 Tool used to clean out the pits in kiddie playgrounds?
- 32 Group of wives
- 34 Egg producer
- 35 Edgy
- 37 It may get jammed under your windshield wiper
- 39 Italian restaurant selections
- 42 Be a braggart
- 46 "... it's full of stars!" ("2001" line)

DOWN

- 1 N.Y.C. gallery
- 2 "One Day in the Life of __ Denirovich"
- 3 Arne at the airport
- 4 Woodard of "Desperate Housewives"
- 5 Chew, as with a rawhide bone
- 6 "Charter" tree
- 7 Prop, really
- 8 Politix refusal
- 9 "Think outside the box," for instance
- 10 James Bond creator Fleming
- 11 That sharp nail in the road you just ran over?

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INTERSECTIONS • PHOTOS OF OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS



t5p

Parker Smandych (front) and Dennis Elkow, Mykhailo Doschak, and Kyle Haley (rear) prepare to celebrate the Ukrainian Male Chorus of Edmonton's 25th anniversary with a concert at the West End Christian Reformed Church.

PHOTO BY IAN JACKSON/EPIC PHOTOGRAPHY

see magazine's ten-day forecast of events in edmonton

sunday

monday

tuesday

wednesday

thursday

friday

saturday



Stuart McLean, Jubilee Auditorium, Dec. 6

DECEMBER 6
theatre | **STUART MCLEAN** All right, Edmonton! The Vinyl Cafe is in town!!! Are you ready to ... er ... get mellow and wistful???? Jubilee Auditorium, 3 & 7:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 7
film | **BROTHERS** Look, if Natalie Portman isn't going to shave her head in this one, Gyllenhaal and Maguire had better beat the living shit out of each other.

DECEMBER 8
theatre | **THE SUPER GROODY '70S** Rehe the era without having to wear the nut-hugging pants. No wait, we still do that. Mayfield Dinner Theatre, 6 p.m.

DECEMBER 9
music | **MISFITS** The horor-punk pioneers (okay, one pioneer and two replacements) descend on Edmonton to terrify the populace and sell a few hoodies while they're at it. New City, 9 p.m.

DECEMBER 10
music | **MICHELLE WRIGHT** Take a like a man and accompany your girlfriend/wife/sun/grandma to Ms. Wright's show at Festival Place, 7:30 p.m. New City, 9 p.m.

DECEMBER 11
music | **SCREECHING WEASEL** If you aren't completely exhausted from seeing The Misfits, here's another veteran punk band. New City, 9 p.m.

DECEMBER 12
music | **SLOAN** Miss seeing these belowed Canadian power-poppers and you'll Never Hear the End of it. Starlite Room, 9 p.m.

Ariana, 20 years old, has received classical ballet training at California Dance Theatre for the past 11 years. She has attended summer programs on site at the New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Ballet Pacifica and Boston Ballet, and recently competed in The American Grand Prix where she received the Gold Medal in the 11-12 age group. We photographed Ariana at 3rd Street Dance Studio in Los Angeles wearing the Tank Thong Bodysuit in Lapis and Opaque Pantyhose in Sangria.

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DANCE

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